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Lycia T. White
August 29. 1928.

The life of Tolstoy, especially celebrated this year by the centenary of his birth, is one of the richest of the ages. Believed by authorities to be the greatest novelist of the past century, he became its greatest prophet and saint. To carry love of humankind to the point of renouncing all property like Francis of Assisi, and yet ceaselessly to seek Truth with all his analytical power, involved titanic mental conflicts and so drama of the highest type.

Tolstoy's final renunciation as an old man is of a terrible austere dignity that commands respect, lighted up, as it is, by a blinding religious passion that drives him out of his home like a wounded lion to seek peace in the wilderness to make his last sacrifice. His distracted wife rushes after, finding him near the desolate railroad station on his deathbed. And at the end there sweeps over all the simple, overpowering devotion of the Russian peasants.

Such is the theme—stranger than fiction—that Henry Bailey Stevens has chosen for his play. In a series of seven illuminating scenes we witness the transition, beginning with the aristocratic life of Yasnaya Polyana, in 1878, to the final tragedy when, misunderstood by family and friends and suffering from hardship and exposure Tolstoy still thinks only of humanity. It is a moving story quite simply treated; for the facts need no embroidery; yet it goes far toward explaining his unique philosophy of life—a philosophy approaching that of Buddha and Jesus.

The play is directed to the reader as well as the actor, and impresses one from first to last with its reality and sincerity.

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TOLSTOY

A PLAY IN SEVEN SCENES

"I am a Yankee," says Mr. Stevens—"born in New Hampshire thirty-seven years ago,—and have spent all my life there except for a few years in Boston, when I was associate editor of the *Woman's Journal,* and tried to help the women get the vote."

At Dartmouth College, where he was graduated in 1912, his interest in writing increased, and he has done more or less of it ever since. The war filled him with such horror that he wrote three one-act plays which came out in 1919 under the title "A Cry out of the Dark." The book did not make him rich, he confesses, but it drew encouragement from many people he respected, among them Georg Brandes. Since then he has done several one-act plays for rural audiences, two of which, "All Alone in the Country" and "City Rubes," have had a wide production by little country groups.

In 1915 he married Miss Agnes Ryan, managing editor of the *Woman's Journal,* who kept her maiden name, as did Lucy Stone before her. "This made a seven days' stir in Boston," says Mr. Stevens, "but the town, I suspect, has long since forgotten the fact." She has been writing also and her poems, "A Whisper of Fire," were published as a companion volume to his. On the strength of these the two were admitted to the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough; and there, under ideal conditions, in a short month he did the first draft of "Tolstoy".

TOLSTOY

A PLAY IN SEVEN SCENES

By HENRY BAILEY STEVENS

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FOREWORD

One thing weights my mind as these pages go to press. They concern more intimately than I could wish a few persons still living.

My apology to them is that, whatever the success of this particular attempt, we need today the drama of Tolstoy. In the lives of Gautama, Jesus and Francis of Assisi a similar conflict has lit with flares still visible the highest religions of the past. And where have modern times produced a saint with a story comparable to Tolstoy's?

Yet it was in his own home that the lightning of his thought, which awed all civilization, struck most terribly. A dramatist must inevitably go for the crisis of his action to the shattered hearth at Yasnaya Polyana. He can only hope that his lines may injure neither the feelings of the living nor the essential memory of the dead.

I am in deep debt for the main sources of the play, not only to Tolstoy's own writings and those of his family, particularly the recollections by Count Ilya, but also to the biographies by Aylmer Maude and Nathan Haskell Dole. Both Mr. Dole and Mr. Maude have been kind enough to read

my manuscript and to make many helpful suggestions. I am under obligation also to the Edward MacDowell Association for an opportunity to write under ideal surroundings; to my wife, Miss Agnes Ryan, for her constant and keen advice; to Miss Alice Stone Blackwell, Professor Vida Scudder, Miss Jane Addams, and Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Freshel for their encouragement and help, and especially to Dr. John Haynes Holmes and Mrs. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, editors of *Unity,* who, in spite of journalistic traditions, had the courage to give the play its first printing.

H. B. S.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SCENE I	11
SCENE II	28
SCENE III	37
SCENE IV	65
SCENE V	87
SCENE VI	116
SCENE VII	146

TOLSTOY

A Play in Seven Scenes

Dramatis Personæ

Count Leo Tolstoy.
Countess Sophie (Sonya) Tolstoy, *his wife.*
Leo.
Marya (Masha) } *Their children.*
Alexandra (Sasha) }
M. Nief, *tutor.*
Serge Petrovitch, *footman.*
Syntayef, *herdsman.*
Pavel, *cobbler.*
Prince Obolensky.
Schneidermann, *Captain of gendarmes and spy.*
F. A. Strakhov.
Byrnes, *a reporter.*
Interpreter.
Telegraph Operator.
Arinushka, Vasili, Mitenka, Agafya, Ivan and other peasants.
Paupers, Landlord, Policemen, as specters.

TOLSTOY

A Play in Seven Scenes

"We may salute in Tolstoy the most august and the loftiest thought that today rises above our humanity."

—*Anatole France.*

SCENE I

The library at Yasnaya Polyana in the year 1878. At the left the wall is lined with books. Parallel to the wall also runs a full stack of books, extending to the ceiling. A stout beam joins the stack to the wall. Past the shelves at the extreme left front a door leads into the study. An open staircase at the rear right leads up into the zala or living-room, and supporting arches run along the rest of the rear wall. On the right towards the rear a door opens into the rest of the downstairs part of the house. The reading table in the center, the surrounding chairs and even the floor are disordered with books, many of them left open at marked pages. In one of the chairs sits Count Tolstoy, now fifty years of age. He is

dressed as in the portrait by Kramskoy, his whiskers still black, his eyes restlessly seeking. He reads avidly for several minutes.

TOLSTOY: You are a fool, Schopenhauer! (*He throws the book into the corner.*)

M. NIEF (*coming downstairs from zala*): Did you speak, sir?

TOLSTOY: I spoke, but it was of no consequence.

NIEF: I beg your pardon, sir.

TOLSTOY (*gathering up a huge armful of books and going to study*): Under no conditions am I to be disturbed. (*Closes door.*)

(*Leo and Masha come downstairs at a gallop.*)

LEO: Come, Mr. Blue. Let's play the Numidian cavalry.

MASHA (*dancing about*): Oh, Mr. Blue! Mr. Blue! You are to jump out at us.

NIEF: Attention, mes enfants. How many times have I told you that I am Monsieur Nief? N-i-e-f, Nief!

LEO: But you look so blue.

MASHA: Oh, let us call you "Mr. Blue."

NIEF: Non, non, I say. I am Monsieur Nief. It ees not propair for you to nickname me.

LEO (*mimicking*): It ees not propair. Oh, I get sick of hearing that.

NIEF: Leo Leovitch! Attention! We will continue our lesson.

(*Serge Petrovitch enters with telegrams. Goes to study door as if to knock.*)

LEO (*running after him*): Serge Peter, Serge Peter, the pumpkin-eater!

MASHA: Oh, Serge Petrovitch, can I play with your whiskers?

SERGE (*playfully*): Away, cubs, or I will hit you with my paw!

MASHA: Oh, Serge Petrovitch is a bear! Serge Petrovitch is a bear!

NIEF (*to children*): *Allons! Allons!* (*To Serge*) The Count left strict orders that he is not to be disturbed.

SERGE: Is that why, then, that you have these young hyenas howling at his door! These telegrams may be important. (*He tucks telegrams partly under the study door. As he bends over, Masha gets on his back.*)

NIEF: Come, Marie Leovna!

MASHA: Play bear with us, Serge Petrovitch.

SERGE: Be still, child of the devil. You will disturb His Excellency. (*He disentangles himself and runs out at right.*)

NIEF: Marie Leovna! Leo Leovitch! Attention! We will proceed quietly with our lesson. Repeat! *Je suis un Russe.* I-am-a-Russian.

LEO: That is not true. You are a Frenchman, because mama said so.

NIEF: Leo Leovitch! You are not to interrupt. It ees not propair.

LEO: You are funny! Why do you say "ees"?

NIEF: Attention! Repeat! *Je suis un Russe.*

LEO: *Je suis un Russe.*

NIEF: Correct! Now say: *Mon pere est le Comte de Tolstoy.*

MASHA: Why, Mr. Blue! That's not so. He is not your father.

LEO: You wish your father was a count, don't you?

NIEF: Silence! Now, repeat as I tell you.

MASHA: But, Mr. Blue, how can we be silent and repeat?

NIEF: Marie Leovna! Repeat: *Mon pere est le Comte de Tolstoy.*

MASHA: *Mon pere est la Comte de Tolstaya.*

NIEF: *Non! Ma mere est la Comtesse de Tolstaya. Mon pere est le Comte de Tolstoy.*

LEO: Oh, I think French is stupid.

NIEF: Repeat!

MASHA: *Mon pere est le Comte de Tolstoy.*

NIEF: Correct! Now, *dites moi,* Leo Leovitch: how ees one to eat hees deener?

LEO (*quickly*): When I eat dinner, I use my fork—so. (*He illustrates.*)

NIEF: Good! Marie Leovna, how ees one to do when one meets a grown-up person?

MASHA: When I meet a grown-up person, I do this. (*She curtseys.*)

NIEF: A leetle more like this, Marie Leovna. (*As he shows her, Tolstoy opens study door and comes out. Nief changes his manner.*) Oh, I ask your pardon, sir. Serge Petrovitch brought you telegrams. I told heem—

TOLSTOY: I am not concerned with telegrams. I want a drink of water. (*As he strides out at right, the children run after him.*)

LEO: Papa, play the Numidian cavalry with us!

MASHA: Oh, Papa, please! (*They go out.*)

NIEF: *Les petits diables!* (*He runs his fingers through his hair, and then realizing that he has disarranged it, he hurries to mirror at rear and readjusts it. He surveys himself with pleasure*): *Ah, mon cher,* you are not such an eel-looking gentleman, *n'est-ce pas?*

(*Tolstoy and children reappear. Nief jumps to attention.*)

TOLSTOY (*to children*): Stop! (*They obey his thundering command at once, running to the opposite side of the room as he points*): Do you know your catechism?

LEO: Yes, Papa.

MASHA: I do, too.

TOLSTOY: It is most important, Monsieur Nief, that they know their catechism.

NIEF: I understand, sir.

TOLSTOY: It is much more important than learning (*he gesticulates*) *comme il faut.* (*As Masha put up her hand*): What is it, Masha?

MASHA: Papa, won't you recite Dr. Hup- (*stuttering*) Dr. Huppen for us?

TOLSTOY: What pests they are! (*He modifies his severity, and his serious manner relaxes somewhat, although it is clear that his mind is still bent in another direction.*) Oh, well! Mind you, no more teasing. (*Reciting.*)

Doctor, Doctor Hupfenzeller,
Haf some pity on a feller:
First, I mustn't eat all day,
Denn he take my pipe away;
Whoa! whoa! Whoa-a-a!

(*At the last line he holds his hands out as though he were driving horses, and runs into the study, his manner gradually assuming its former seriousness. He closes the door quickly without paying any attention to the telegrams.*)

MASHA (*who has been in a paroxysm of delight*): Oh, goody!

LEO (*reciting*):

Doctor, Doctor Hupfenzeller,
Haf some pity—

NIEF: Enough! Attention, *mes enfants!* We

will now take up the catechism. Who made the world?

LEO: God made the world.

NIEF: Who is God?

MASHA: God is a spirit, inf-in-fin-ite-ly perfect—

(*Countess Tolstoy comes down the stairs from the zala. She is seventeen years younger than her husband, and has an executive bearing. In one hand are several galleys of proof.*)

COUNTESS: I thought I heard Leo Nikolayevitch. Was he not here?

NIEF: He remained only for a moment, madame, to play with the children. He ees in his study. It ees his wish not to be disturbed.

LEO: Mama, I can say it. (*Reciting.*) Doctor, Doctor Hupfenzeller—

COUNTESS: That will do, my dear. Monsieur Nief, I think you had better continue the recitations in the zala.

NIEF: As you wish, madame.

COUNTESS: By the way, I hope that you are paying particular attention to their manners. It is most important that they know how to behave themselves in good society.

NIEF: That is my specialty, madame.

COUNTESS: Run along, children. (*To Nief.*): Please tell Ustyusha to let me know the instant

the baby wakes up. (*As they go upstairs, she rings the bell.*)

SERGE (*at right*) : Did you ring, madame?

COUNTESS: Tell Nikolai that we will have cutlets for dinner, and that he may make the children some cakes.

SERGE: Yes, madame. (*He hesitates.*) There were some telegrams, madame. I put them under the door.

COUNTESS: Thank you, Serge Petrovitch. (*He goes out. She tiptoes to study door.*) Leo Nikolayevitch! (*Tenderly*) Lyovotchka! (*She picks up telegrams, opens one and reads. Then more excitedly*) : Lyovotchka! (*She opens the other and becomes even more agitated. Pounds now on the door.*) Lyovotchka! Please open.

(*Tolstoy opens the door. He has a wild, intensely serious manner.*)

COUNTESS (*jubilantly*) : There is a telegram here from Mikhailovsky asking most earnestly for a new novel. Moscow, he says, is wild over "Anna Karenina." And, Lyovotchka, what do you think? Here is another telegram from a London publisher offering a hundred thousand roubles for the English copyright.

TOLSTOY (*abstractedly*) : I am glad if it pleases you. (*He crosses to table.*)

COUNTESS: And Lyovotchka, in the mail this

morning Polonsky sends a letter from Turgenieff in Paris. Listen to what he says (*reading*): "I am considered an artist, but what am I worth when compared to Tolstoy?" Do you hear, my dear? (*reading again*): "He has no equal in European literature." Is that not the height of success—beyond our fondest dreams?

TOLSTOY: It may be it is the depth of success.

COUNTESS: He wants to know when you will have a new novel. All Paris, he says, is waiting—what is the matter, Lyovotchka? (*He does not answer.*) Tell me what it is that is troubling you.

TOLSTOY: You know what it is, Sonya.

COUNTESS: I do not know. Your eyes are fixed and strange. You hardly speak. Usually when proof comes, you mark it till it is almost illegible, and I have to spend the night copying it off; but this proof is almost as clean as when it left the printer's shop. You are not yourself with the children. You do not even trouble to open a telegram. Tell me, what is the matter?

TOLSTOY: I am looking for something that I do not find.

COUNTESS: Won't you tell me about it? (*He is silent.*) Oh, Lyovotchka, give up this endless searching. No good can come of it. Stepan is here. Why do you not go out shooting with him?

TOLSTOY: Shooting? You do not know what you say.

COUNTESS: It would do you good to get out.

TOLSTOY: I would only be running away from this thing that strangles me. And I could not run away if I would. I have tried. It would go with me; and when I came back, it would have me even more tightly by the throat. No, Sonya, it is not my body that is at fault. I am healthy. I am strong.

COUNTESS: What shall we tell them about the new novel? I ought not to delay longer in sending word. (*When he remains silent, she goes over and shakes him.*) Lyovotchka, what shall we tell them?

TOLSTOY (*swallowing and getting up*): Tell them that I shall waste my time no more.

COUNTESS: Lyovotchka, think! What is this nonsense?

TOLSTOY: At least that is clear. I will waste my time no more.

COUNTESS: You are at the height of your career. Even Turgenieff yields you the palm. All Europe is coming to recognize you. You must shake off this madness.

TOLSTOY: Well, what if I should become more famous than Gogol, than Pushkin, Shakespeare,

Moliere—than all the writers of the world? What then? What would it matter?

COUNTESS: What would it matter? You are mad.

TOLSTOY: No, I am not mad. I am at last sane. Does it matter if the leisurely ladies of the educated classes read my books for a few years—or even for a few centuries, heave their breasts, and sigh, and exclaim: "Ah, that Tolstoy! He understood life." Pah! I do not understand Life. And what is more, I do not understand Death. And in all these books I have found no one who does.

COUNTESS: You must not fail the people. They look to you as a leader.

TOLSTOY: Well, if they do, that is all the more reason why I should say nothing unless it is worth saying. I will give them no more drivel.

COUNTESS: You should be ashamed.

TOLSTOY: If life is a riddle and I cannot solve it, I will not pretend at wisdom.

COUNTESS: Oh, Lyovotchka, we must have faith.

TOLSTOY: Faith! In what shall I put my faith? I have tried to put it in the teachings of the Church—to have faith in something, even as other men. Only this morning I told Nief to take pains with the children's catechism; but if he had

turned and asked me why, I could not have answered him. As soon as I had reached my study, I felt myself a hypocrite. I would like them to have faith. But the old faith does not satisfy me. Good God! What is my reason for if I am not to use it? If I am to have faith in words, the words must make sense.

COUNTESS: Are you not sacrilegious?

TOLSTOY: I do not know. I am truthful at least. And I will tell you that I am like the traveler in the old Eastern fable who was attacked by a wild beast. To save himself he gets into a waterless well; but at the bottom of it he sees a dragon with its jaws wide open to devour him. He dares not get out for fear of the beast above, and he dares not descend for fear of the dragon below; so he catches hold of a branch of a wild plant that is growing in a crevice of the well. His arms grow tired, and he feels that he must soon perish, death awaiting him on either hand, but he still holds on; and he sees two mice, one black and one white, gradually making their way around the stem of the wild plant on which he is hanging, nibbling it through. The plant will soon give way and break off, and he will fall into the jaws of the dragon. The traveler sees this, and knows that he must inevitably perish; but while still hanging, he looks around him, and finding some

drops of honey on the leaves of the wild plant, he stretches out his tongue and licks them. Thus do I cling to the branch of life, knowing that the dragon of death inevitably awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I cannot understand why such terrors have fallen to my lot. I also strive to suck the honey which once comforted me, but this honey no longer satisfies. And all the time the white mouse and the black, the white day and the black night, gnaw through the branch to which I cling. I see the dragon plainly, and the honey is no longer sweet. And I cannot turn my eyes away. This is no fable, Sonya, but a living, undeniable truth.

COUNTESS: You frighten me, Leo Nikolayevitch. Think of me and the children.

TOLSTOY: Ah, Sonya, do you understand what the honey was? The two drops which more than anything else have drawn my eyes away from the cruel truth were my love for my family and for my writings.

COUNTESS: And you say they are no longer sweet?

TOLSTOY: My family! They too are human beings. They are in the same situation as myself. Why should they live? Why should I love them, care for them, bring them up and watch over them? To bring them on the one hand to an

ignorance which I despise, or on the other to the same despair which fills myself? As I love them, I cannot conceal the truth. Below them, too, the dragon is waiting.

COUNTESS: Oh, Lyovotchka, Lyovotchka, I do not understand. (*She weeps.*)

TOLSTOY: At least let us speak no more of writing novels. That is not a way in which I wish to pass my time.

COUNTESS: It is terrible. I do not understand. (*From above an old woman's voice can be heard calling*): Sophie Andreevna! Sophie Andreevna! The baby is awake! (*The Countess with an effort stops crying, and starts up the stairs.*)

COUNTESS: I must get hold of myself. (*Suddenly she turns and running back throws her arms around her husband.*) Oh, Lyovotchka, let us go to Moscow. It is time for Seryozha to enter the University and for Tanya to go into the society in which she belongs. And we must see more to Ilya's education. It is too difficult here, living in the country. Lyovotchka, say that we will go.

TOLSTOY: I will see, Sonya. I will see.

(*The voice is heard again from above, calling*): Sophie Andreevna! Sophie Andreevna!

COUNTESS: I am coming, Ustyusha. (*She goes.*)

TOLSTOY: Ah, Sonya, so you would run away.

Well, I do not blame you. But you were wrong to suggest shooting. I might have made a mistake in what I shot at. (*He sits down, then suddenly gets up and going over to the corner picks up the books that he has thrown there. Reads*:)

"That we so fear annihilation, or, what is the same, that we so wish to live, only shows that we ourselves are nothing but that wish—life—and know nothing beyond it." In other words, life is what it ought not to be, an evil; and a passage from it into nothingness is the only good in life. I did wrong to call you a fool, Schopenhauer. (*He puts the book on the table carefully.*) Solomon said much the same thing. (*He picks up another book at a marked passage and reads.*)

"And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly . . . And I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then I said in my heart, 'As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me'; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity." (*Puts book down.*) And Sakya Muni, the young Indian prince, who went out for a drive and saw for the first time a dead man, he also understood. (*He picks up another book and reads*) : " 'What will become of him'? asked the prince. He was told that the body would be buried in the earth. 'Why?' 'Because he will never

be alive again, and only stench and worms can come from him.' 'And that is the lot of all men? It will be so with me? I shall be put under the ground to stink and have worms come from me?' 'Yes.' 'Then back!' said the prince. 'I will not go for the drive, and never will go again.' " (*Puts book down.*) I, too, will go for no more drives when that is what I see.

(*He rushes into the study, and comes out with a stout rope. Going between the book shelves he throws the rope over the connecting beam. He stands for a moment irresolute with the rope in his hands.*)

I am convinced. Life is an evil. It is an absurdity. It is a joke played upon us. I ask all the philosophers that have ever lived: "What is the meaning of my life?" They can answer nothing satisfactorily. It has no meaning. I ask: "What will come of my life?" They can answer nothing. I ask: "Why does all that is exist, and why do I exist?" And they can only answer: "Because it does exist."

I turn to science, and it gives me a lot of exact answers to questions that I never asked: about the chemical elements in the stars, about the movement of the sun, about the infinitely small and imponderable particles of ether; but when I pin it down and ask it what is the meaning of my

life, it can only say: "You are what you call your life; that is, a temporary and accidental agglomeration of particles. The mutual action and reaction of these particles on one another has produced what you call your life. This agglomeration of particles will continue during a certain time, then the reciprocal action of these particles will cease, and with it will end what you call your life, and with it will end all your questions as well. You are an accidental lump of something."

Well, I can cease to be a lump of something. (*He puts the rope about his neck.*) I can play a joke, too. I can step out of the evil that is life into the good that is death.

(*From upstairs can be heard the voices of the children playing. He hesitates. He stops.*)

That is what I would do if I were a strong man, if I were not a weakling.

(*Then he pulls the rope back, and slowly hides it away in the study. Comes back.*)

No. That cannot be the answer. (*Goes to table.*) I must think harder. (*After a moment.*) There is one more place to look.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE II

Outside a peasant's hut near Tula in the year 1881. The hut runs along the left. It is a low building with thatched roof. A door is near left front, and two windows towards the center, with a bench in front of them. A small shed is connected to the hut at a right angle and extends part way along the rear. On the right stretch flat fields with a forest in the background.

Tolstoy enters with the stride of a person accustomed to walking long distances, and knocks at door. When there is no answer, he knocks again. After a moment Syntayef comes around the corner of the shed at rear. He has the appearance of a poor muzhik, in a greasy black sheepskin jacket. His beard is mud-colored, tinged with gray, and his eyes are large and colorless.

SYNTAYEF: You can go in if you wish. It is not locked.

TOLSTOY: I am looking for Syntayef, the stone-cutter. Are you he?

SYNTAYEF: I am Syntayef. I was a stone-cutter. Now I am a herdsman.

TOLSTOY: I am Leo Tolstoy. Prugavin told me of you.

SYNTAYEF: You are Count Tolstoy?

TOLSTOY: Yes, but let us not bother with titles. I have come to you thinking that you might help me. I have lost my way.

SYNTAYEF: The road to Tula lies over there. It is a straight road.

TOLSTOY (*meaningly*): Do not misunderstand me. It is not to Tula that I want to go.

SYNTAYEF (*after a moment*): Where do you want to go?

TOLSTOY: Wherever is necessary.

SYNTAYEF: I understand. Most people think that too difficult a road.

TOLSTOY: As long as it is the right road, I am not afraid.

SYNTAYEF: Will you not sit down, brother, and tell me where you have been?

TOLSTOY (*sitting on bench*): I have been searching in books—stacks of books, rooms of books, houses of books, books written by the Greeks, by the Egyptians, by the Romans, by the English, by the Hindus, by the Chinese. Tell me, can you read?

SYNTAYEF: Only a little—what is necessary.

TOLSTOY: Then you are fortunate. You can go straight to Truth like a horse to water. You do not have to have it piped to you.

SYNTAYEF: I do not scoff at learning.

TOLSTOY: I do not find God there.

SYNTAYEF: Where else have you looked?

TOLSTOY: I have been to the Optin Monastery. I have walked as a pilgrim to the Catacombs at Kief. I have visited the Trinity-Sergius Lavra. I have talked with the Old Believers in Samara, with the Molokans and the Doukhobors, with a hermit in a cave at Buzuluk. I have argued with priests and Radstockites and Bashkirs.

SYNTAYEF: And is there no other place that you have looked?

TOLSTOY: I know what you mean. I have looked also in my own heart, and sometimes I feel that I can catch a glow there like the reflection of the sun on a frosty window-pane. I have not seen the sun, but it seems to me that it is there, beyond the window.

SYNTAYEF: Well, perhaps you do not need help, then.

TOLSTOY: It is this way with me. I am in a boat which was pushed off from an unknown shore. Oars were put into my inexperienced hands, and I was left alone. I used the oars as best I could to get to the opposite shore, but as I approached the center of the stream, the current became stronger. I found that it carried me out of my course. I met other navigators like myself who were being swept away by the stream.

Many of them had thrown down their oars. There were large boats and enormous ships crowded with men, some struggling against the current, others gliding on it. The more I watched the long line floating down the current, the more I forgot the course pointed out to me. In the very middle of the stream, amid the crowd of boats and vessels floating down, I altogether lost the course and threw down my oars. From all sides the joyful and exulting navigators, as they swept down stream, assured me that there could be no other direction. And now all of a sudden I hear the roar of the rapids in which I seem bound to perish, and I see within them boats that have already been broken up. I fear that I cannot avoid destruction. I grab my oars, and try to struggle against the current; but the oars are clumsy. I do not seem to know how to use them. I can now see back up stream that multitudes of boats have been making headway all of the time toward the opposite shore; they are the great, hard-working masses of the people; but we educated, cultured men seem to have forgotten how to row.

SYNTAYEF: In order to row you need to put your oars into water. They will not operate in the air.

TOLSTOY: What do you mean?

SYNTAYEF: I mean that creeds and rigmarole do not count.

TOLSTOY: I understand that.

SYNTAYEF: It is not what you say that counts. It is what you do. That is what is the trouble with the churches.

TOLSTOY: Are you not a Christian then?

SYNTAYEF: As you said a few minutes ago, we will not bother about titles.

TOLSTOY: Tell me your experience.

SYNTAYEF: I was a stone-cutter in Tula, I and my sons. We made grave-stones for people—a foolish business. Of what use is a grave-stone? When the body is dead, that is the end of the body. We took grain that other people had grown, and garments that other people had made; and in return we gave them grave-stones. This food would have fed starving people; the clothing would have kept people warm. One day I said: It is not enough to give candles in the church to God; we must give our whole lives. I talked with my sons, and since then we cut no more stone into foolish blocks. Some people owed us money. I said: We will not collect it. We came here, where I serve the people as herdsman.

TOLSTOY: You find God in this way?

SYNTAYEF (*shrugging his shoulders*): I find Something in every blade of grass. The leaves

in the trees have a new meaning. I feel Something glowing within me. I serve all men as my brothers. My heart is full.

TOLSTOY: And you think I too would find Something in myself?

SYNTAYEF: Try it and see.

TOLSTOY: Prugavin did well to send me to you.

SYNTAYEF: There is nothing new about it. It has been said from the time of the Master.

TOLSTOY: Ah! You believe, then, in Jesus Christ?

SYNTAYEF: Let my works answer.

TOLSTOY: You do well not to trust the lips. Tell me have you found the way hard?

SYNTAYEF (*shrugging his shoulders*): Hard? Most people would say so. It has not been traveled enough to be smooth.

TOLSTOY: Ah!

SYNTAYEF: But I have found it sweet.

TOLSTOY: Your family are happy to have taken it with you?

SYNTAYEF: I trust so. They were happy.

TOLSTOY: What do you mean? Are they not here?

SYNTAYEF: My wife died many years ago. Now my daughter is married.

TOLSTOY: And your sons?

SYNTAYEF: They are in Schlusselburg.

TOLSTOY: In prison?

SYNTAYEF: Yes.

TOLSTOY: How did that happen?

SYNTAYEF: An officer came. He told them they must take the oath of the Tsar.

TOLSTOY: They would not?

SYNTAYEF: The Gospel says: Thou shalt swear not. They would not swear allegiance to anyone but God. The officer told them they must at any rate take rifles and join the army.

TOLSTOY: And they refused?

SYNTAYEF: The Gospel says: Thou shalt kill not. They said the rifles smelled of blood. And so the soldiers took them away to Schlusselburg.

TOLSTOY: What do you do without them?

SYNTAYEF: I shall probably be taken also.

TOLSTOY: Why? You are too old for the army.

SYNTAYEF: An officer came. He said I must pay taxes. I said: I will not give money to pay for murder. He said: Well, we will take your cattle.

TOLSTOY: Did you let them?

SYNTAYEF: I told them they sinned, but I did not quarrel with them. I said: "I will not open the gates for you; but if you must do so, go ahead. You will not find the door locked." So they took my cattle and sold them.

TOLSTOY: That was hard.

SYNTAYEF: I felt that I did right. I do not fear. I work for the peasants.

TOLSTOY: This method of life—you find it brings peace?

SYNTAYEF: Not if you want peace of the body.

TOLSTOY: You have lost what property you had.

SYNTAYEF: It was a fence between me and other men. I am glad I have lost it.

TOLSTOY: You have broken the law of the Tsar.

SYNTAYEF: Well (*shrugging his shoulders*) I have kept the law of God.

TOLSTOY: And you are left alone.

SYNTAYEF: No. (*After a pause*) I am not alone.

TOLSTOY: Syntayef, I am afraid of you.

SYNTAYEF: I am not surprised. You are a man.

TOLSTOY: Yes, that is it.

SYNTAYEF: You have many people working for you. You are given good food. Most of our brothers have to eat kvas, bread and onions. You are given fine clothing. (*He feels of Tolstoy's apparel.*) All about us are people who do not have enough to wear. Fuel is brought to you to keep you warm. Do you know what it is to feel yourself freezing?

TOLSTOY (*groaning*): I have written about it. That is all.

SYNTAYEF: You have more land than you can use.

TOLSTOY: Fifty thousand desyatins!

SYNTAYEF: Most peasants have to get along with one.

TOLSTOY: It is true.

SYNTAYEF: What do you give your brothers in return for these things?

TOLSTOY: I pay them their wages.

SYNTAYEF: No, I do not mean money. What do you give them?

TOLSTOY (*groaning*): I give them books that they cannot read.

SYNTAYEF: If you gave them of your life as they give of theirs to you, you would not need to ask for God.

TOLSTOY: Ah! I have thought these things before, Syntayef. I look out into the life ahead of me as I look out now into those fields. It seems like a strange country, dark, untraveled. I shall have to grope my way. I shall be alone, walking on and on—into what? But I am not afraid.

SYNTAYEF: I think your oars now are feeling the water.

(*Suddenly Tolstoy drops on his knees. Syntayef joins him.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE III

A small room in the Tolstoy apartments in Money Lane, Moscow, 1882 (over a year later). At the right near a window overlooking the city are a cobbler's bench and appliances, and a little iron stove, heated by a kerosene lamp. Strips of leather, a shoe-maker's apron, and some partly finished boots are about. At the right rear a door goes into the kitchen, and at the left rear a short flight of steps leads up into the dining-room, which can be seen through a series of windows along the rear wall. Stools and old chairs, among them an easy one, furnish the room. A couch is at the left. The dining-room as seen through the windows has a sumptuous appearance of sparkling white and silver.

When the curtain goes up, the stage is dark. Tolstoy is lying on the couch sleeping. White figures come slowly across the room and past his couch as he dreams. First an old woman, carrying a washboard.

TOLSTOY (*turning restlessly on his couch*): What a terrible odor! Is this No. 30? What is your name?

(*The old woman mumbles something indistinctly.*)

TOLSTOY: Marya Ivanovna. I have it. What is your occupation? A wash-woman. Are you married?

WOMAN: My husband is dead. I have three children to support. They do not have enough to eat.

(*A peasant in bast shoes hobbles forward with a cane.*)

TOLSTOY: And who is this?

PEASANT: Martin Semenovitch. I have had nothing to eat all day.

TOLSTOY: Merciful God! What a wretched hole to live in.

(*A lean young man with a ragged shirt and a visorless cap appears.*)

TOLSTOY: I am taking the census. Your name, please.

YOUNG MAN: Peter Petrovitch. (*He is trembling with a chill.*)

TOLSTOY: Poor fellow! You look cold. What do you do?

YOUNG MAN: Anything I can get. In Jesus' name, Master, tell me where I can find work.

TOLSTOY: How many more people live in this room?

(*A long-legged old man with a wedge-shaped*

beard, wearing an overcoat with a rope girdle and bast shoes, follows. With him is a little boy dressed in ragged summer clothing. The boy is crying and trying to protect himself from the cold.)

OLD MAN (*tipsily*): Youshh haven't seen half of us yet.

LANDLORD (*stepping forward from the background—a better-dressed, heavy man*): Never mind him. He's drunk.

LITTLE BOY: Let me in by the fire, mister. It's dreadfully cold.

TOLSTOY: Here. Have a glass of sbiten. (*The boy tries to drink from the glass, but he shakes so that he spills it over himself.*)

OLD MAN: Why don't you learn to drink, you little fool?

LITTLE BOY (*to Tolstoy*): Nobody has ever been so good to me before.

TOLSTOY: Here is a rouble to get something warm.

OLD MAN: I need money, too. (*At these words all of the people who have past before rush back, saying*: "He gave the boy a rouble." "Give us money too." "We need money. We are starving.")

LANDLORD: Here, you. Get back. This gentleman is taking the census.

(*The landlord pushes them back.*)

TOLSTOY: Is this No. 31, Ivan Fedotych? Why is everything so filthy?

(*A woman with a blouse open in front and a bold manner enters.*)

TOLSTOY: Who are you?

WOMAN: I am a woman of the bourgeoisie.

TOLSTOY: What is your name?

WOMAN: What difference does it make?

TOLSTOY: What is your occupation? (*The woman laughs.*) How do you support yourself?

WOMAN: I sit in the restaurant.

TOLSTOY: What do you live by? (*The woman laughs.*)

LANDLORD: She is a prostitute. (*To the woman.*) What use is there in talking bosh? "I sit in a restaurant"! You sit in a restaurant! Say outright—"I am a prostitute." (*To Tolstoy.*) She does not know how to call herself.

TOLSTOY: Hush! It is not proper for us to put her to shame. If all of us lived in godly fashion, there would be none of them. Who is this one?

(*An old, dishevelled woman, lean as a skeleton, with torn waist, comes forward.*)

LANDLORD: She was a lewd woman, but now nobody wants her, so she has no money to buy anything with. Step up, Agafya.

OLD WOMAN: What is the matter now?

TOLSTOY: Tell me, how do you live?

OLD WOMAN: I do not know. They are driving me out.

TOLSTOY: Is it true that you have had nothing to eat today?

OLD WOMAN: I have not had anything to eat yesterday or today.

TOLSTOY: Here is a rouble for you.

(*At the words all of the people who have past rush forward, saying*: "He gave Agafya a rouble." "We need it as much as she does." "Give us all roubles." "Give me a rouble in Christ's name." *A policeman comes up.*)

POLICEMAN: Here, you. Run along, or I'll arrest the whole lot of you.

TOLSTOY: What is the matter?

POLICEMAN: The authorities do not permit begging. (*He disperses them. They all vanish, but the voice comes back*: "Give me a rouble in Christ's name!")

TOLSTOY (*tossing feverishly*): Merciful God! Is there no end!

(*He turns and sleeps more quietly. The room has been lighting up slightly. After a moment Serge enters, and going over to the window puts up the curtain. Daylight fills the room. He opens the window, letting in the sound of traffic and*

voices of peddlers. Serge turns and seeing Tolstoy on the couch starts to tiptoe out.)

TOLSTOY (*awaking*): Is that you, Serge Petrovitch?

SERGE: I beg your pardon, Your Excellency. I did not know you were here.

(*Tolstoy sits up. He is dressed in peasant costume.*)

TOLSTOY: I must have fallen asleep. I got up and dressed, intending to go to work early. But the evil habits of luxury fasten themselves to one like leeches. What is that man calling, Serge Petrovitch?

SERGE: He is selling firewood in the street.

TOLSTOY: Close the window, will you, Serge? No, I will close it myself. (*He goes over and looks out for a moment, then pulls the window shut.*) Many people can shut out their thoughts as easily as that. What a hateful place of smells, stones, luxury, poverty and vice! (*Noticing that Serge is lighting the stove.*) You seem to have forgotten, Serge Petrovitch. I will attend to the fire. And I will also look after my bedroom upstairs.

SERGE: I beg your pardon, Your Excellency.

TOLSTOY (*attending to stove*): Please do not embarrass me with titles, Serge Petrovitch. I am only a man such as yourself.

SERGE: I beg your pardon, Leo Nikolayevitch. I find it hard to forget.

TOLSTOY: This stove needs more oil. By the way, you might tell Pavel when you go out, that I shall be ready directly.

(*Tolstoy goes out with lamp at right. Countess Tolstoy comes down from dining-room at left.*)

COUNTESS: I have been looking for you, Serge Petrovitch. Please help Ustyusha give the children breakfast upstairs. See that the fires are going well. It is a cold day outside.

SERGE: Yes, your ladyship. Shall I do first an errand for Leo Nikolayevitch?

COUNTESS: Serge Petrovitch!

SERGE: I beg your pardon, your ladyship. I mean: shall I do first an errand for His Excellency?

COUNTESS: We have to be more particular here in Moscow, Serge Petrovitch. Yes, you may do the errand first. (*Leo enters with overcoat on his arm and cap in hand.*) Tell Nikolai as you go out that we shall want dinner today for fifteen. I have ordered sturgeon and chops, and we will have chicken soup and blanc mange for dessert. He knows about the salad.

(*Serge leaves at right.*) Leo, I do not think you had better go out today. It is too cold.

LEO (*pouting*): Oh, Mama, I want to go out. You let Ilya and Tanya go.

COUNTESS: They have not gone out this morning.

LEO: No, because they haven't got up, that's why.

COUNTESS: Leo, you musn't be saucy to mother. (*Masha comes in from right, coughing and licking her finger.*) Are you coughing, Masha?

(*Masha coughs again.*)

MASHA: I want some King of Denmark drops, Mama.

COUNTESS: Mother will get you some at once. (*She goes out at right.*)

LEO: You haven't got a cold any more than I have. You've been eating jam.

MASHA: How'd you know, Mr. Smarty?

LEO: I saw you licking your fingers. Nikolai gave you some. I'll tell mama on you.

MASHA: If you do, I'll tell her how you called Ustyusha bad names.

COUNTESS (*returning with licorice drops*): Here, Masha! (*Gives her drops.*) Now, no more coughing!

LEO (*coughing*): I think I need some too, Mama.

COUNTESS: Leo, you're putting that on. That's not nice.

LEO: I've got as much of a cold as she has.

MASHA: He hasn't either.

COUNTESS: Well, you see why neither of you should go out today, don't you? (*She smiles, realizing that she has the advantage here, and looking in at the dining-room starts counting on her fingers.*)

LEO (*at cobbler's bench*): Mama, will papa make me a pair of boots?

COUNTESS: Do not bother me now.

LEO: Mama, why does papa dress like a muzhik?

(*She does not answer, but continues to reckon.*)

MASHA: Papa is a muzhik.

LEO: He is not.

MASHA: He is.

LEO: He is not. He's a count.

MASHA: Anyway, he's a working-man.

LEO: Huh! He don't need to work. He's got a bag full of roubles, 'cause I saw it. (*He plays at bench with tools.*)

COUNTESS: Stop your nonsense now, children.

LEO: Mama, why does papa eat oatmeal so much?

(*She does not answer.*)

MASHA: Oh, mama, what's pudding today?

COUNTESS: Blanc mange, my dear.

MASHA: Oh, goody! (*After a moment.*) Mama, Leo's playing that he's papa.

COUNTESS: Leo!

LEO: Why does he, Mama? Why does he eat oatmeal so much?

COUNTESS: How can I reckon when you keep asking questions? Yes, we shall need to put another leaf in the table. (*She goes out at left.*)

LEO: This is the way you do it.

MASHA: Let me do it.

LEO: You pound like this.

(*Tolstoy enters with stove lamp which he has filled. The children go to watch him.*)

LEO: Why don't you let Serge Petrovitch do it, Papa?

TOLSTOY (*arranging stove*): Because it is good for us to do things for ourselves.

LEO: Papa, I can say my catechism now all by myself.

MASHA: I can say most of mine, too.

TOLSTOY: Hm-m! The catechism is not so important, my children, as I once thought. Can you say the five rules that I taught you the other day?

MASHA: First, do not be angry.

LEO: Second, do not lust. What does "lust" mean, Papa?

TOLSTOY: It is a great sin of grown-up men,

my boy. I will discuss it with you a little later. Go on.

LEO: Do not swear, lest—lest—

TOLSTOY: Lest you give away the control of your future action.

LEO: Fourth, do not resist by violence.

MASHA: And fifth, love your enemies. Papa, ought I to love the girl who pushed me into the snow yesterday?

TOLSTOY: My little girl, do you want to work with me on a great experiment—greater even than building our own fires, and making our own shoes?

MASHA: Yes, Papa.

TOLSTOY: And we will not be afraid if other children laugh at us, and do not understand at first?

MASHA: Yes, Papa.

TOLSTOY: Then I say, that you ought to love that little girl particularly. Be kind to her. At first she will push you all the harder into the snow. Still be kind to her. Try to love her in your soul. Share your bread and jam with her.

MASHA: Mama says she is not very clean.

TOLSTOY: Then she is probably all the poorer, and so all the more hungry. Will you try it, even as I am trying it?

MASHA: Yes, Papa.

LEO: Huh! If a boy pushed me in the snow, I'd lick him.

TOLSTOY: Then you should say a different set of rules, Leo. They would run something like this: I will be angry when I please. I will use violence whenever I am provoked. I will hate my enemies. And in time you will find that everybody else is your enemy, and you will hate everybody but yourself. And in the end, Leo, you will hate yourself. If you should follow that set of rules in your life, Leo, and Masha should follow the set that I have taught, you would have earned at the best only the fear of your fellows. Masha would have earned their love. Which do you think would be the better life?

(*Pavel, the cobbler, enters, a modest, black-bearded, serious man.*)

(*Leo is silent.*) Well, you do not need to answer now. Think it over. We will call it a problem for tomorrow's lesson. Good morning, Pavel.

LEO: Oh, goody! The cobbler!

PAVEL: God be with you, Leo Nikolayevitch! And you too, children!

(*They go over to the bench. Tolstoy puts on the leather apron, and the two men sit on stools while the children watch eagerly.*)

TOLSTOY: Let me see, now. We have learned how to splice the bristles. We split them at the

thick end like this, and then splice them with the ends of the waxed thread.

PAVEL: Like this.

TOLSTOY: No, no. Let me see if I know it. Like this, is that not right?

PAVEL: That is right.

LEO: Let me try it, Papa!

TOLSTOY: You can try it on this one, Leo. (*Leo busies himself with trying to splice some bristles. Masha follows hungrily each of her father's moves.*) Then you close the seams of the upper, joining the quarter to the vamp.

PAVEL: That is right.

TOLSTOY: Then you hammer the back into shape.

PAVEL: Do it this way, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: Like this?

PAVEL: Yes.

TOLSTOY: And now we are to finish pinning on the out-soles. I hold the boot upside down between my knees like this. I hold the wooden pegs in my hand, and my mouth like this. And I hammer them into the new red sole like this. (*He starts hammering.*)

PAVEL: Allow me, Leo Nikolayevitch. I'll do it.

TOLSTOY: No, no, I'll do it myself. You do your work, and I'll do mine; it's the only way

to learn. (*They work, Tolstoy awkwardly but persistently.*)

LEO: Ouch! I hit my thumb!

PAVEL: That's too bad, Leo Leovitch. We all do that when we are learning.

LEO: Boo-hoo!

TOLSTOY: There, there, Leo! Don't cry.

LEO: It hurts.

TOLSTOY: Come here, and we'll put a little salve on it.

(*He doctors it for the boy.*)

LEO: I'm going to see if Ilya is up yet. I'll beat you, Masha. (*The two children run out at left. Through the windows from now on occasionally the servants can be seen arranging the dining-table.*)

SERGE (*entering*): Prince Obolensky has come, sir.

(*Obolensky follows him in—a tall, handsome, hearty young man, dressed in the pink of fashion.*).

TOLSTOY: Good morning, Cousin. I am glad to see you.

OBOLENSKY: Why, Leo Nikolayevitch, I hardly knew you. What does this mean?

TOLSTOY: It means that I am trying to do something useful. This is my friend Pavel, Prince Obolensky.

PAVEL: God be with you, Your Excellency.

OBOLENSKY (*ignoring Pavel*) : Something useful! Really, Leo Nikolayevitch. I hope you do not make light of the heights of achievement to which you have raised yourself. All Moscow is proud to have you with us. Everybody is singing your praises as the premier writer of all Russia.

TOLSTOY: Not the people whom I have seen, Obolensky. They had never heard of me.

OBOLENSKY: And now I hear great news of your success abroad, of how all Europe is receiving Anna Karenina.

TOLSTOY: Anna Karenina! I am ashamed of it. Three years of usefulness I spoiled, and only to titillate the bosoms of the leisurely ladies of the European cities! I defiled my pen with it.

OBOLENSKY: Ah, but it shows life, Leo Nikolayevitch!

TOLSTOY: Life! It shows how an officer fell in love with a married woman. What difficulty is there in that? There's no difficulty, and above all no good in it. I will tell you, Obolensky, I would rather be able to put on a good boot-heel than to write a hundred Anna Kareninas.

OBOLENSKY: Well, I would rather read your book than to wear your boots, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY (*laughing*) : That is a good one, Obolensky. Well, this is not such a bad boot, is it, Pavel?

PAVEL: I have seen worse, sir.

TOLSTOY: And most people, if you stop to think of it, take boots before they do books. I do not believe you would go barefoot to have your Anna Karenina!

OBOLENSKY: I will come around in five years and see if you still feel the same way, Leo Nikolayevitch. I fancy these ideas will have worn out by that time as well as the boots.

TOLSTOY: Ah, do you think, then, that I have no imagination? You think that I cannot realize how the back can ache, how the thumbs get sore, how the smell of leather can pervade the whole existence of a fellow like Pavel here who has made boots all his life? You think I do not know drudgery. For shame! You say I am a great writer, and yet you believe that I have no imagination.

OBOLENSKY: At least I will grant you courage, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: Ah, I have been a coward for a long time before my thoughts, Obolensky. Even now I might have put off my action if I had not taken the census. You have no idea—

SERGE (*entering*): General Skobyleff's orderly is here, sir. The general is outside and sends greetings.

OBOLENSKY: General Skobyleff! The hero of Plevna.

SERGE: The general hopes for your friendship, sir.

OBOLENSKY: Ah, this is indeed success! Skobyleff is the idol of the hour.

TOLSTOY: He is not an idol that I can worship. Send this word to him, Serge Petrovitch: that he already has my friendship in common with all other men, and that he can have my acquaintance if he will change his business.

OBOLENSKY: Why, Leo Nikolayevitch! (*Serge goes out.*)

TOLSTOY: What would you? His business was to shed the blood of five thousand men. Do you know what that means? Five thousand lives snuffed out in their prime! Five thousand homes made desolate! In the stupid, sordid butchery that we call War! And he is proud of it! And the upper tenth tells the lower nine tenths that they should cheer him. Well, I will not cheer him. If he wishes to see me, let him come with clean hands.

OBOLENSKY: You must have Tartar blood, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: As I was saying, Obolensky, I took the census. I went to Rzhanov House, and to Lyapin House. Tell me, have you ever been there?

OBOLENSKY: It is not exactly a section of the city that I frequent.

TOLSTOY: Ah, I will wager not. But you will never know Moscow unless you do. In one room forty people sleeping, men, women, and children intermingled. The air full of vodka and impurities. Here, an old man dying of typhus. There a harlot covered with lice. Children, half-clad, shivering. Beggars feeding on liver and bread. They come to me in my dreams crying for roubles.

OBOLENSKY: I do not enjoy such sights.

TOLSTOY: You speak of them as if they were a theater. I tell you they are there, actually. If you do not recognize them, it is because like the ostrich you hide your head in the sand.

SERGE (*entering*): There is a strange man outside, who says his name is Syntayef.

TOLSTOY: Syntayef! Let him in at once. (*Serge goes out.*) I want you to meet him. He is a most remarkable man.

(*He hurries out to greet Syntayef, and reenters with him.*)

TOLSTOY: My friend, I am rejoiced to see you. Come in. You must stop with us. I have a great deal to tell you. This is Prince Obolensky, Syntayef, and this Pavel, who is teaching me to be a useful citizen.

OBOLENSKY (*attempting to hide his surprise*): Indeed!

TOLSTOY: Lay off your sheepskin, Syntayef. The room is getting warm at last.

SYNTAYEF: No, I will keep it on, I guess. (*He does remove his sheepskin cap.*)

OBOLENSKY: Do you come from far, sir?

SYNTAYEF: I live near Tula.

TOLSTOY: He is one who is helping to cure me of the disease of luxury, Obolensky.

OBOLENSKY: Indeed! A most extraordinary physician, I am sure!

TOLSTOY: I can recommend him to you, Cousin. Indeed, I have several relatives, Syntayef, who could profit from your instruction. But come, let me show you how I can put on a sole.

OBOLENSKY: Yes, we are not sure whether Leo Nikolayevitch is saving souls or spoiling them.

TOLSTOY: Look out, Obolensky. It is one of the symptoms of the disease of luxury that the patient makes a joke of serious things.

(*Tolstoy starts cobbling again.*)

SYNTAYEF: I know now where I can get my boots mended.

TOLSTOY: Yes,—and without charge. Look! Isn't that grand!

OBOLENSKY: It doesn't seem so very difficult.

TOLSTOY: Suppose you try it.

OBOLENSKY: That's agreed!

TOLSTOY (*getting up*): Very good! but on one condition: for every peg that you drive in, I will pay you a rouble; for every one you break, you pay me ten copecks. Do you agree?

OBOLENSKY: By all means. I will deprive you of some of your troublesome luxury, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: Yes?

(*Obolensky takes the boot, hammer and pegs, and tries. He breaks the first one. The others laugh.*)

TOLSTOY: Ha, ha! Ten copecks.

OBOLENSKY: Wait, that is only the first one. (*He tries again and breaks it.*) Confound it!

TOLSTOY: You see it is not such a difficult business!

OBOLENSKY: Well, we will try again. (*Again he breaks it.*)

TOLSTOY: Thirty copecks! (*Obolensky, excited, tries five more, one after the other, breaking each one. On the last one, he hits his thumb.*)

OBOLENSKY: Damn it!

PAVEL (*shaking with laughter*): Did you say he would be a good apprentice, Leo Nikolayevitch?

SYNTAYEF: I think I had better not try it.

TOLSTOY: No, it is very easy. All you have to

do is to hit like this! (*And he pretends that his thumb has been pounded.*)

OBOLENSKY: Well, you have the laugh on me, gentlemen. (*He counts out eighty copecks.*) Here is the wager.

TOLSTOY: That belongs to Pavel. He is the master on this job.

OBOLENSKY: Here you are, my friend. (*Gives money to Pavel.*)

(*Countess Tolstoy enters from left.*)

PAVEL (*pocketing money*): Thank you, sir.

TOLSTOY: This is my friend Syntayef, Sonya, of whom I told you. My wife.

COUNTESS: I am glad to see you.

SYNTAYEF: Thank you.

COUNTESS: Oh, Cousin!

OBOLENSKY: Sophie Andreevna!

COUNTESS: How is our cousin Elizaveta Valerianovna?

OBOLENSKY: In the best of spirits. And you? And the children? Particularly the new baby?

COUNTESS: All well, thank you.

OBOLENSKY: Let me see. Alexsei Lvovitch? Am I not right?

COUNTESS: You do well to remember them all so well.

(*Tolstoy and Syntayef are with cobbler at right. Countess and Obolensky at left.*)

TOLSTOY: You see, Syntayef, you do like this.

OBOLENSKY: What a topsy-turvy house it is, Sonya! I have not yet got adjusted to the change.

COUNTESS: I do not wonder.

OBOLENSKY: What a strange fancy Leo Nikolayevitch has taken! I hardly recognized him in his peasant costume. We are expecting such wonderful books from him, and now he tells me he is going to offer us boots. Is it all a joke, Sophie Andreevna?

COUNTESS: I hardly know what to tell you. He has been changing like this for several years, now.

OBOLENSKY: He refused to see General Skobyleff, and he greets—Syntayef—with open arms!

COUNTESS: I had hoped that it would all pass like an illness when we came to Moscow. Seryozha had to enter the university, you know, and Tanya will come out soon.

OBOLENSKY: Ah, she is a very charming young lady now, I understand.

COUNTESS: You must stay to dinner, Cousin, and meet them all. Prince Urusof is to be here, and Rubinstein and Danilyevsky, the novelist.

OBOLENSKY: That will be very charming, Sophie Andreevna. I accept with pleasure. But tell me, Leo Nikolayevitch is not really giving up his writing, is he?

COUNTESS: Alas! He is working on some sort

of religious discussion. He reads and thinks until his head aches, and all to show how incompatible the Church is with the Gospel teachings. Hardly ten people in Russia will be interested in it; but I can do nothing. I only hope he will make haste and finish it, so that he can pass on to something poetic again.

TOLSTOY: There now, it is actually finished. (*He holds up the boot proudly.*) We have done a good morning's work, Pavel. I think you need not stay any longer. (*He pulls on the boot and does a kind of dance around the room.*) See, Sonya! and you, Obolensky! When you can do a job like that, we will return you your eighty copecks, eh, Pavel?

OBOLENSKY: It is indeed wonderful.

TOLSTOY: Tomorrow at nine, Pavel! We must thoroughly master this art.

PAVEL: Very well, sir. (*He goes out at right.*)

COUNTESS: You are a big boy, Leo Nikolayevitch. (*To Obolensky.*) At any rate I am glad to see him happy again.

SERGE (*entering*): There is a captain of gendarmes below from Prince Dolgoruky.

TOLSTOY: Bring him up at once. (*Serge goes out.*)

COUNTESS: A captain of gendarmes! What can this mean?

OBOLENSKY: From the Governor-general of Moscow!

(*Schneidermann enters in official military costume.*)

SCHNEIDERMANN: Have I the honor of addressing His Excellency, Count Tolstoy?

TOLSTOY: I am he.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Prince Dolgoruky, Governor-general of Moscow, sends greetings. He wishes to know whether there is a peasant of Tula here by the name of Syntayef?

TOLSTOY: I do not consider that that is any of Prince Dolgoruky's business.

COUNTESS: Do not offend him, Leo Nikolayevitch.

SYNTAYEF: I can answer his question. I am Syntayef, the peasant.

SCHNEIDERMANN: He wishes to inquire somewhat particularly as to what business the said Syntayef has in Moscow?

TOLSTOY: Tell him that I consider this an insult. If he wishes to know, let him come himself and find out.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*suavely*): He does not mean it as an insult, Your Excellency. He means it only as a precautionary measure, begging your pardon. There have been many plots of late against the safety of the realm, and Prince Dol-

goruky, not being familiar with the plans and opinions of the said Syntayef, wishes to be ac—

TOLSTOY: And it has come to this!

SCHNEIDERMANN: —wishes to be acquainted with them more particularly.

SYNTAYEF: I have nothing to conceal, I hope. I will—

TOLSTOY: Stop! This is insufferable! Is there no limit to the prying, officious fingers of the Government? Do they have nothing better to do with their time than to trace imaginary plots to my house? When people are perishing from hunger, from cold, from sickness, why do they not attempt to inquire into that? Have they so much as winked an eye-lash to indicate that they even knew of such things? And yet, if a person like Syntayef attempts to lead a truly Christian life, the Government must inquire "more particularly" as to his whereabouts. Here! (*Opening the door.*) Go this way! Go back to Dolgoruky and tell him what I have said! But whatever you do, hurry! Go!

SCHNEIDERMANN: Very well, sir. I will deliver your message.

TOLSTOY: Go! I implore you! Go! (*Schneidermann goes.*) If I am a count, I will for once take advantage of my position. (*He slams the door after Schneidermann.*)

COUNTESS: Why, Leo Nikolayevitch! You have lost your temper.

TOLSTOY (*his manner changing*): It is true. (*Groaning.*) I was angry. Woe is me! I have broken the commandment. I might have said all that I wished without such passion. It is as you said, Syntayef. It is not easy for a man who has been spoiled with pride and position and riches to become a Christian.

SYNTAYEF: I will go away now. It will be best.

TOLSTOY: No, do not go. I beg of you.

SYNTAYEF: I know that my presence here will embarrass you further.

TOLSTOY: Syntayef, you must not go. Would you desert me? Sonya, urge him to stay.

COUNTESS: After all, Leo Nikolayevitch, if he —(*but seeing her husband's face, she changes*)— but really, sir, you must stay to dinner at least.

SYNTAYEF (*glancing at the dining-room*): You must know, my friends, I am hardly used to such an affair.

OBOLENSKY (*making a wry face*): Yes, we are counting on learning more about these famous opinions.

TOLSTOY: Syntayef shall stay to dinner, and long afterwards. He shall make us a visit, if he can put up with our luxurious ways. You will hear,

Cousin, as Someone else once said, how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

OBOLENSKY: Oh, I don't know. Most of us get along pretty well.

TOLSTOY: You think so? Ah, you do not dare to think, Obolensky. Tonight we shall have a dinner. There will be at least five courses, each of them arranged to tempt the appetite to eat more than is necessary. The table will be spread in what is called the best of taste. The dinner will have been cooked by a specialist. It will be served by two butlers in evening dress with white ties and white gloves. The guests will arrive luxuriously in carriages. They will wear expensive clothing. Not a woman's gown will have cost less than 150 roubles. Everything will be—*comme il faut*. And all the time outside, down there (*pointing out the window*) homeless people will be walking the street—old men in torn rags, women ready to sell their decency for a meal, children—My God! the children!—Tell me, if you were to sit down to a full meal, while opposite you sat a man in that corner who had not eaten for three days, could you enjoy your food? No, when you saw the poor wretch's mouth watering and eyes begging, you would have to share it with him. But in there (*pointing to the dining-room*) you can eat alone, and it does not bother you. It does not bother you

—unless you dare to think. Yes, Syntayef, tonight you shall see me in the midst of my shame. In the meantime, come this way. (*He goes out at right with Syntayef.*)

COUNTESS (*calling at left*): Serge Petrovitch! Serge Petrovitch!

SERGE (*appearing at left*): Did you call, madame?

COUNTESS: Tell Nikolai to set two more places for dinner tonight.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE IV

Tolstoy's study at Yasnaya Polyana in the year 1891 (nine years later). The room is bare as in the painting by Ryepin with one door at right rear, a rack with clothing suspended at center rear, and at left a window set in an arched wall of white plaster. A saw hangs at the left rear, and a shovel stands at left front. By the left wall is a writing table with books, a candle and manuscript. In front of the table is a low box-like seat with blanket over it, and nearer the front an armed chair. A couch is at the right. Around a corner at the left front is a small table and chair.

Masha, now a young woman twenty years old, is arranging flowers in a vase on the main table. She is a thin, fair girl, rather tall, with strongly marked cheek-bones and bright blue eyes. She hums to herself, and occasionally smells of the flowers. The light through the window is of bright morning.

Tolstoy enters with a scythe over his shoulder. His hair and whiskers are now gray; he is sixty-three years of age; but his walk and manner seem as brisk as ever. He wears a homespun crash

blouse girded at the waist with a belt over home-spun jean trousers, and common bast shoes.

MASHA: Are you through mowing, Father?

TOLSTOY: Through for the morning. (*He hangs up the scythe in the left rear corner.*) The grass is as dry and as tough as wire, and only when the dew is on it does it lie at all lightly on the scythe. We shall go at it again towards evening.

MASHA: For whom were you working?

TOLSTOY: We mowed for Zharova today. The poor woman has got the five children on her hands, and no hay in the barn for the stock.

MASHA: Who helped you?

TOLSTOY: Fienermann and Ilya; and Vasili and Osip Makarof were in our gang this morning, though they will have to work for themselves to-morrow.

MASHA: Why is that?

TOLSTOY: This hot weather is ripening up the rye, and they have got to hurry. If they do not get the hay in soon, they are going to get left.

MASHA: That is always the way it is in haying.

TOLSTOY: Yes, it is a good fourteen-hour stretch. I ought not to have stopped now.

MASHA (*holding up the flowers*): Father, see what I brought you.

TOLSTOY (*smelling of them*): My dear, that is very kind of you. (*He sits down by the table.*)

MASHA: You do like them, don't you?

TOLSTOY: Very much indeed.

MASHA: Father, I am glad that you still like flowers.

TOLSTOY: What do you mean, child?

MASHA: Well, you did give up tobacco and liquor, you know.

TOLSTOY: We all know that they are poisons. Why should I injure my system with them?

MASHA: And now you have given up eating all meat.

TOLSTOY: Ah, I gave up nothing beautiful in that—the flesh of dead bodies, roast carcasses. Do you think them beautiful—the stuck pig, the stunned calf, the hen with its head cut off that still tries to walk? It is the beautiful thing that I would save. I would keep alive the tender eyes of the cow, the lithe strength of the calf, that is as beautiful as a deer. These animals are our friends, Masha. They come when we call them. They rub up against us to be scratched. And do you compare eating their mutilated bodies to the fragrance of flowers? Pshaw, my child! I am ashamed of you. This is the first step.

MASHA: But Father, is there no limit to being a Christian?

TOLSTOY: Ah, that is the question. I am inclined to think not. I do not find any limit to love. The compassion that fills one for one's kindred, for all humankind and even, as I say, for these sentient animals that seem to sympathize and to understand,—this compassion bubbles up as if from a never-ending source, from a region that cannot be charted. At least I have not as yet charted it. But then, I am only thirteen years old, Masha.

MASHA: What joke are you playing now, Father?

TOLSTOY: It is only thirteen years since I was reborn. You see I am not so old in this life, Masha, as you are in yours.

MASHA: Was it a hard experience, being reborn?

TOLSTOY: It was as painful as I should judge birth ever to be. Life lost all sense of meaning. At first it was as if I were lying on the edge of a great chasm, and the earth below was sliding away. It seemed inevitable that I should be swept away into the great abyss of Nothingness. For months I wanted secretly to take my own life. I had to hide ropes away from myself, and I did not dare to go out with a gun. You were only a little girl then, Masha. You probably do not remember.

MASHA: I remember playing the Numidian

cavalry, and how you used to recite a funny little poem to us about a Doctor Hupfen-something.

TOLSTOY: Ah, yes. Doctor Hupfenzeller.

MASHA: How terribly lonely you must have been since!

TOLSTOY: Lonely?

MASHA: Yes. None of the rest of us seem to have understood.

TOLSTOY: No, I am not lonely, my child. Only this morning in the meadow, as I mowed behind Vasili and Osip, I thought: How good it is to live simply and to work. There is too much to be done for a person to be lonely.

MASHA: And are you happy, Father?

TOLSTOY: Yes, my dear. . . . But there are still some things that make me very sad. (*He gets up.*) However, we are going to change those. Do you know where your mother is, Masha?

MASHA: I think she is in the zala. Shall I call her?

TOLSTOY: No, I will go and look for her. Copy this article for me, will you, my dear? I want to get it off to *Posrednik.* (*He picks up a number of papers, arranges them, and gives them to her.*)

MASHA: Starting here?

TOLSTOY: Yes, that is right. (*He goes out.*)

(*Masha starts writing on the main table. Some*

of the words she makes out with difficulty, and she reads aloud as she copies:)

MASHA: "Weeds grew up in a good meadow." —"To get rid of the weeds, the owners of the meadow mowed them down, but the weeds only grew more numerous."—"And a good and wise husbandman," h-u-s-b-a-n-d-m-a-n, that is right. Your handwriting is pretty bad sometimes, Father—"And a good and wise husbandman visited the owners of the meadow, and among other instructions which he gave them, he said that the weeds ought not to be mowed down, for that made them only grow more numerous, but that they ought to be torn out by the roots." I wonder if that is what Father is trying to do—to tear weeds out by the roots! (*There is a knock on the door.*) Come in! (*Prince Obolensky enters.*)

OBOLENSKY: I beg your pardon, Masha. Serge told me I would find your father here.

MASHA: I think he went up to the zala. Did you bring Cousin Elizaveta Valerianovna?

OBOLENSKY: No, I drove over alone this morning. I told your father I would help him draw up some papers.

MASHA: Oh, that is why he came in from the hay-field then! I thought it was not like him to stop.

OBOLENSKY: There is quite a crew haying, I

see. I noticed three different gangs as I came along.

MASHA: Yes, they are hurrying to get it in before the rye is ripe.

OBOLENSKY: Some of them do not seem very proficient at it.

MASHA: No? (*She continues her writing.*)

OBOLENSKY: One of the new converts showed me his hands. They were all covered with huge blisters.

MASHA: He did well to keep it up so long then.

OBOLENSKY: Tanya told me a good one the other day. Did you hear about it—the Englishman?

MASHA: No, I do not believe I did.

OBOLENSKY: Well, it seems that one of the new sect—an insect perhaps—came along, an English disciple in knickerbockers and Norfolk jacket. (*He acts out his story.*) He was strong for all this help-your-brother sort of business. He had come to help the Russian peasant in his hard lot. It seems that your father and Feinermann and some of the others were starting out to the field with rakes, pitchforks and whatever other beastly instruments they use; and our friend, Percy, started along too, his hands in his trousers' pockets. "Where are you going?" they asked him. "Out to the fee-eelds," he replied. "What are you

going for?" "Why," he says, "to hel-lp." They began to question him: "Why, how are you going to help? You haven't got any tools." They offered him a rake or something. But he refused it. "Oh, I don't need any rake," he says: "I shall hel-lp them with advi-ice." (*They laugh.*) There's Tolstoy gone to seed for you.

MASHA: I don't see why you should lay such actions up against my father's beliefs any more than your own adventure into the field of labor.

OBOLENSKY: What do you mean by that?

MASHA: Didn't you once set out to follow his example in making shoes?

OBOLENSKY: Come now, Masha! That's hardly fair of you. Anyway I learned my lesson. I haven't tried to work since.

MASHA: You're really proud of that, aren't you?

OBOLENSKY: I'm consistent anyway—just as consistent as old Simplification. You remember him, don't you? The old Swede who started out by going bare-footed in order to get near to Nature. Said he believed in Simplification. Kept taking off more and more of his clothes in order to get nearer and nearer.

MASHA (*sighing*): Yes. We had to put him out of the house at last.

OBOLENSKY: There's such a thing as getting too close to Nature, you see.

MASHA: And so you believe in keeping as far away as possible?

OBOLENSKY: Well, not exactly that.

(*Masha removes her papers and writing materials to small table around corner at left front and continues copying.*)

OBOLENSKY (*taking the hint*): Well, I won't bother you any longer. I'll try to follow Tolstoy around the house at least. I won't promise any more than that. (*He goes.*)

MASHA: I should think that would be about as far as you could follow any one idea at a time, Cousin. (*Reading as she copies.*) "It finally went so far that nothing was left in the meadows but weeds, and people complained and tried to find all kinds of ways to mend matters,"—I wonder! (*pauses*)—"but they did not make use of the one means which had long ago been prescribed to them by the good and wise husbandman. They did not pull the weeds out by the roots."

(*Tolstoy and Countess enter. She has several opened letters in her hand.*)

COUNTESS (*bitterly*): This is great news! The censor has refused permission to print the Kreutzer Sonata!

TOLSTOY: Indeed! What does he say?

COUNTESS: That it is contrary to the church teaching, and that it would undermine the whole structure of society.

TOLSTOY: Well, well! If the book is of God, it will do its good—some way, sometime!

COUNTESS: Sometime! The point is that it cannot be included in the collected works! It will cut off the proceeds by just that much.

TOLSTOY: Really, my dear, you should sympathize somewhat with the censor on this score. As I recall it, you did not approve of the ideas in this book yourself.

COUNTESS: Whatever my beliefs, I do not want them interfering. I will appeal to the Emperor myself.

TOLSTOY: They are beginning to attack me. That is all.

COUNTESS: It is just what I have told you would happen. You did not hesitate to slap Dolgoruky's face—so to speak—to rebuff all of the military, and now you are planning to indict Pobyedonostsef himself.

TOLSTOY: I hope I shall never cease to expose superstition and oppression wherever they exist.

COUNTESS: I do not want you to cease it. I only want you to help straighten out the publication of the collected works. I want the Kreutzer Sonata included.

TOLSTOY: Sonya, I have told you that this whole matter of buying and selling my ideas—this business of copyrighting and attempting to protect what should be free to the whole world—grieves me very much. I speak, and everyone is free to hear. I write, and everyone should be free to read.

COUNTESS: Let us not go into that. In the present instance, I want the ideas set free by the censor so that I may publish them.

TOLSTOY: The ideas cannot be bottled up by the censor. If there is anything of value in them, it will leak out. Let us not be disturbed, that is all that I say. I will join with you in the appeal if you wish.

COUNTESS: Yes, and you are ready to give the right to publish to any job printer that comes along.

TOLSTOY: It is true that I want my ideas spread, and that I do not care about the profit.

COUNTESS: You are as impractical as ever.

TOLSTOY: Sonya, do not be irritated. Come with me. Join with me in my ideas. We have been drifting apart.

COUNTESS: It is you who have drifted away. I have stayed the same as I have always been.

TOLSTOY: Sonya, I know in my soul that I am

on the right track. Do you want me to leave the path that is marked for me?

COUNTESS: No. Only I do not see my way to go with you on it.

TOLSTOY: Come! I am still strong. I am not a parasite. I am no longer, as formerly, spoiled by leisure. I can follow the peasants all day in the mowing, and keep pace with them. I can build houses. I can make shoes and clothing. I can raise food. We can always earn the few, simple things that we shall need. Let us give our land to the peasants who have really earned it, and our books to the people who need whatever truth is in them. Let us give up this property that corrupts us.

COUNTESS (*breaking down*): Oh, Lyovotchka, if it had not been for the children! Do you not know that I would have followed you even as a beggar?

TOLSTOY: My dear, it would be better for the children to be brought up unpampered.

COUNTESS: Do not ask it, Lyovotchka.

TOLSTOY: Sonya, I must ask it. It is as though I had been blind, and suddenly my eyes were opened. For a long time I have been blinking in the light, striving to see my way clearly; and now I am becoming accustomed to the light, and I see the way that I must go. I have waited a long time—hoping, hoping that my family too would

recognize the truth. For over ten years now I have paid penance; I have suffered in the consciousness that I am a man of wealth while professing that all mankind are my brothers; I have had to watch my children being sucked into the whirlpool of luxury in spite of the example that I strove to give them. And it seems to me that I can no longer stay passive.

SONYA: Oh, Lyovotchka, do not ask it.

TOLSTOY: Yes, I must at last ask it. Even now the peasants are getting ready for the winter. Do you remember how last winter, while we sat in our well-heated rooms, a man was found frozen to death on the highroad? He was frozen to death because no one would give him a night's lodging. We stuff ourselves with cutlets and pastry of every sort, while in Samara the people are dying by thousands with swollen stomachs from famine. We ride comfortably to the bathing-place, while Prokofi's last gelding lies dead, and he has no beast to plow his strips with. We are still snoring in bed, while the tailor has had time to walk to Tula and back to get hooks and eyes for our fur jackets. Do you think we can longer keep to ourselves the wealth that would feed those starving people and keep their knees from shaking when the winter blasts come?

COUNTESS: After all, our wealth would be so little in the great need.

TOLSTOY: It is true. Do you think I have not thought of that? Our wealth would be but a drop in the pool. But our example—our example would be great. It has come to this pass: The people cannot believe in our sincerity. And why should they? Oh, it is easy for us to talk! When we have 50,000 desyatins of land, a comfortable house, plenty of fuel and food, large orchards of fruit trees, a croquet ground, a tennis court! It is easy for us to say that we are Christians, that we follow the Golden Rule! It is easy for us to say: We must all love one another. What does it mean? Will we back it with our lives?

COUNTESS: They know that you set the example. In their hearts they know it.

TOLSTOY: If I set the example, it is the example of hypocrisy, so long as I have the things that would keep them alive. No. It is quite proper to apply the acid test to beliefs that are so easily mouthed. We must no longer shrink from applying it.

COUNTESS: Ah! I have seen this hour coming!

TOLSTOY: Yes, we have both seen it and dreaded it; but it has had to come.

COUNTESS: I have watched you going farther and farther in these terrible beliefs that have no

limit. I have seen you drifting—yes, rowing with all your might—as far as possible from our old anchorage. You have not had to pay attention to the children that you fathered. You have not had the thousand and one cares of managing a household. You have had time to follow all of these wild vagaries, to surround yourself with a company of cranks!

TOLSTOY: Sonya!

COUNTESS: God forgive me for speaking this way to you! But let us get it over. Say what you have in your mind.

TOLSTOY: Simply this: That I can no longer remain rich while the world is poor. I am going to give up all my property.

COUNTESS: It is not all rightfully yours to give up.

TOLSTOY: I had hoped that you would feel like joining me in this step.

COUNTESS: And what if I do not?

TOLSTOY: I understand your rights. I have not forgotten that you brought 50,000 roubles as a marriage dowry. I remember—and fondly—how you labored with me over my writings, copying and recopying into the long hours of the night. I feel that you have a claim on all of our wealth and on my writings prior to my rebirth—in your own eyes at least. Therefore, I propose, if you

do not wish to relinquish this claim, to turn over all of our property to you and to those of the children who desire it.

COUNTESS: And what would you do? Go away?

TOLSTOY: I had not planned to desert you, if that is what you ask.

COUNTESS (*bitterly*): And the burden which you cannot bear yourself you would transfer to your wife!

TOLSTOY: You do not need to take it. You can join me in giving it to the peasants. That is what I want you to do. That is what I implore you to do. It is an example which our country needs. If only people would do this, they would avoid a day of terror for all our children later on. The world will have to face this question some day even as we ourselves are facing it. Face it with me now, Sonya. Let us give up this property which is only a curse to us. You think it is more difficult than it really is. The things which you dread—poverty, hunger, labor—these things are not so dreadful for us as the reckoning which our children will have to pay if the world does not hear us. Let us make ourselves heard—now!—in the strongest speech which we can utter.

COUNTESS: Oh, it is terrible!

TOLSTOY: I tell you I do not believe it would be

so terrible as you think. Our hearts would be warmed by the heat of our love.

COUNTESS: I am not warmed by it. I am cold. Thirteen children I have borne. I have had the care of Aunt Tanya and Aunt Pelageya. I have managed a large household. I have supervised the children's education. Even now I have taken over the publication of the main bulk of your writings in order to save for our children the money that you would have given away. Do you think I can consent to raising our children in poverty? Oh, Lyovotchka, I cannot accept your Christianity. (*She breaks down.*) Oh, I have not had time to think!

TOLSTOY: Sonya, do not fool yourself about the children. This life of luxury is not a good thing for them. I asked for Leo this morning at nine o'clock. The well-bred young man was still asleep; he had been playing cards till midnight the night before. Asleep! And in the midst of the haying season! Ask the peasants what that means. When every year for lack of hands great areas of grass that are needed for the stock remain unmown! When the peasants are up before sunrise—old men, tottering women, little children, working, working into the night, hardly stopping to take their kvas, bread and onions. Only yesterday I saw a little boy, a grandchild, carrying along a

pitcher of water; he was all bent up, taking short steps with his bare feet with difficulty, changing the heavy pitcher from one hand to the other. I saw a woman eighty years old—old enough to have been my mother—raking, raking all day, slowly shuffling her bast shoes from step to step, looking gloomily in front of her like a dying animal. And at the end of the day, when they stop, she sits down, and then lies down, with the same dead glance. And then after a while she gets up groaning, and drags her way home after the others. And Leo sleeps! And plays cards! And Andrei plays tennis!

COUNTESS: We owe the children an education.

TOLSTOY: And what better education could we give them than an honest example?

COUNTESS: Sasha and Vanitchka are hardly more than babies. You would take from them the things that you have given the older children.

TOLSTOY: I have set my heart on having them at least brought up in the right way.

(*There is a moment of strained silence.*)

TOLSTOY: Well, let us have an end to this.

COUNTESS: I agree to that. I am ready.

TOLSTOY: I have asked Obolensky to come over this morning in order that we might get preliminary legal advice, whichever way we decided.

COUNTESS: Yes, I met him in the zala.

TOLSTOY: What do you say, Sonya, will you join with me in this step?

COUNTESS: Leo Nikolayevitch, I have known that this was coming. I have felt that the children themselves should have a voice in the matter—a point which seems to have escaped your attention.

TOLSTOY: Do not be bitter, Sonya. You talked with them?

COUNTESS: I have asked them what their wishes were.

TOLSTOY: What did they say?

COUNTESS: They said that they did not agree with your ideas. They did not want to give the property up.

TOLSTOY: They all said that? Tanya and Seryozha?

COUNTESS: Yes.

TOLSTOY: And Masha?

COUNTESS: Yes,—all of them.

TOLSTOY (*after a moment*): Well, I have stood alone before.

COUNTESS: I am sorry, Lyovotchka.

TOLSTOY: I have stood alone in all Russia, speaking out against the Emperor and the Church. I can stand alone again—even against my family!

COUNTESS: Lyovotchka, I know that it is hard.

TOLSTOY (*walking slowly to the doorway*):

Serge Petrovitch! (*He opens the door and calls.*) Serge Petrovitch!

(*In the meantime Masha in the corner at first has paid no attention to the conversation, but has continued copying. At the latter part of it, however, she has stopped, listening with horror to what has been said. She now runs out excitedly.*)

MASHA: Stop!

COUNTESS: Masha!

MASHA: Father! Stop!

COUNTESS: You were eaves-dropping?

MASHA: I did not mean to listen. I was busy copying. I—

TOLSTOY: What does this mean?

MASHA: I was in the corner, copying the article. I did not mean to listen. And then—I had to! Oh, forgive me! (*She bursts out crying.*)

TOLSTOY: There! There! My child!

MASHA: Oh, Father, do not misunderstand me. I cannot! I will not!

COUNTESS: Masha! What are you saying?

MASHA: I will not take my share.

COUNTESS: You do not know what you are saying.

MASHA: I do. I did not understand before. I did not realize how true it all is—what Father has been saying.

TOLSTOY: There! There! Don't cry so.

COUNTESS: She is all worked up! She does not know what she says.

MASHA: I do know too. It is all true. I have seen these people working as he says. And we have been living in luxury. And we have been brought up in idleness. And it is not a good thing! It would have been better for us all to work together the way poor people do. It is not good for Leo, and Andrei and the others. I have seen it all.

COUNTESS: Masha, think what you are saying!

MASHA: Oh, I know what I am saying. The others can take the old property if they want it. I will not pay that price.

SERGE (*entering*): Did you call, sir?

TOLSTOY: Please find Prince Obolensky. He is somewhere around the grounds. Ask him to come up. (*Serge goes out.*) Masha!

MASHA (*throwing her arms about her father*): Oh, Father! You have been alone too long.

TOLSTOY: There, there! Listen! Go and comfort your mother. It is hard for her.

(*Masha goes over to the Countess, who is sitting weeping at the table, and kisses her.*)

COUNTESS: Oh, Masha! It may be that you are right. He is a leader, one who goes ahead of the crowd, pointing the way that men should go. Oh, my beloved! I am of the crowd. I live in its current. . . . I am held by it. He is right, but I

cannot do what he demands. In five centuries it may be that men will tread in the path in which he is a pioneer!

OBOLENSKY (*in the doorway*): Shall I come in?

TOLSTOY: Yes, come in!

COUNTESS: Yes, we must settle the details.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE V

The remains of a peasant's hut in Begitchevka, in the year 1893—two years later.

The hut, which has been half destroyed by fire, is at the left. Bricks and charred timbers are about. The great oven, on which the peasants sleep, is still largely intact. Beyond and at the right are fields, as in Scene II.

Arinushka, an old peasant woman, the owner of the hut, is sitting on the charred door-sill, sobbing. Two peasants, Vasili and Mitenka, are standing in center.

MITENKA: It is a thousand pities.

VASILI: Fire is a terrible thing. How did it start, Mitenka?

MITENKA: In the night they saw it coming from the chimney. It licked the roof as clean as by a cow's tongue. They had difficulty in getting the old woman (*indicating Arinushka*) out alive.

ARINUSHKA (*wailing*): Oh, I have nothing left to live for! Was it not enough for my husband to go away to the city? Was it not enough for my children to be put under the sod? And now my

beautiful house, the pride of my heart, has been taken from me.

MITENKA: Her beautiful house! She thinks it was a palace. Be still, Arinushka. There is no good in breaking your heart.

ARINUSHKA: I have no roof for my old head. And the hay for my cow has gone with it.

MITENKA: It was lucky that the cow herself was not burned, Arinushka.

ARINUSHKA: She is of no use to me without hay to feed her. And of what use am I any longer in the world!

MITENKA: It is a thousand pities.

VASILI: At any rate, the vermin must have been thoroughly destroyed. There is a saying that there is some gain with every loss.

ARINUSHKA: Oh, Queen of Heaven, have mercy upon my soul!

MITENKA: There is no good in breaking your heart. Did you have any vodka left, Arinushka?

ARINUSHKA: It was in the loft. It was destroyed.

MITENKA: Ah, that is a thousand pities.

VASILI: Did I not tell you, Mitenka, that fire is a terrible thing? If she had had the vodka, it would have warmed our hearts.

MITENKA: It would have made her forget her troubles.

VASILI: Why do you not help her, Mitenka, to rebuild her hut? She is alone in the world, and is without shelter.

MITENKA: I have got to thresh the oats today. But you, Vasili, you are a master at building huts. I think you could be to her like a great godfather.

VASILI: My back has been giving me so much trouble I dare not. And my potatoes are not yet dug.

(*Schneidermann enters, dressed as a villager, smoking a cigarette.*)

ARINUSHKA: My beautiful house! The pride of my old heart!

SCHNEIDERMANN: God be with you. (*They stare at him.*) It seems He has not been with you. (*He goes over and examines the hut*)

MITENKA: Who is this man, Vasili?

VASILI: I do not know him.

MITENKA: He speaks in a friendly way.

ARINUSHKA: My husband has left me. My children have been taken away. And my beautiful—

MITENKA (*showing off before the stranger*): Be still, old woman. That does not give you the shack again.

SCHNEIDERMANN: When did the fire come?

MITENKA: In the night. The roof was licked as clean as by a cow's tongue.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ah, it is a pity.

MITENKA: It is a thousand pities.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Yes, it was bound to come soon of course.

MITENKA: How? What do you say? Vasili, he says it was bound to come.

SCHNEIDERMANN: It is just as much a pity, I suppose.

VASILI: What is it that you mean, that the fire had to come? It seems to me that it never should have come.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Oh, it is easy to understand. Will you have a cigarette? (*Offers a package to Mitenka, who takes two. Schneidermann on seeing this pockets the package without offering it to Vasili.*) Give one to your friend there. (*Mitenka grudgingly surrenders one of them.*)

MITENKA: You say it is easy to understand?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Why it is a curse, of course. That is plain to see.

MITENKA: A curse!

VASILI: You mean because old grandmother sold vodka?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Of course not. Do you think that every house where vodka is sold burns? If it did, a fire would be as common a thing to see as a fool.

MITENKA: Ha! Ha! You speak well there, friend.

VASILI: How could it be a curse then?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Why! Have you not accepted aid from the devil's agent in this district?

VASILI: God forbid such a thing!

MITENKA: I do not understand, but there may be something in what you say.

VASILI: What do you mean by the devil's agent?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Do you not know that a wolf in sheep's clothing is among you?

MITENKA: What do you mean?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Do not keep asking "What do I mean?" like a fool! You know very well that the old man who is the ambassador of the Evil One—God protect me from him (*He crosses himself*)—has been pretending to give favors here such as can be given only by God through His Holy Church.

MITENKA: Ah!

VASILI: Surely you do not mean Count Leo Nikolayevitch?

SCHNEIDERMANN: It is true that in the past he was a nobleman, and received many favors from both the Little Father in St. Petersburg and the Holy Synod; but he has long since deserted them, and now serves the Evil One. Why, it is well known everywhere but here that if you once ac-

cept his aid, he brands you on the forehead and delivers you to the Accursed One.

MITENKA: Let me see, Arinushka, if your forehead is marked.

ARINUSHKA (*who has paid no attention to this*): Oh, Queen of Heaven! Tell me what I have left to live for!

SCHNEIDERMANN: The mark is often invisible except to those who are acquainted with such things. I could tell it, but it is not worth while. It is of no matter. Listen. We know very well that Hell is full of flames, do we not? Well, and it was by flames that this hut was destroyed.

MITENKA: You see, Vasili, that explains it.

VASILI: I do not yet understand.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Fool, in the night at this man's instigation an imp, a messenger from the Accursed One himself—God protect me (*He crosses himself*)—had only to bring a torch from below—say from yonder well—and touch the thatch.

MITENKA: When we see this old man, let us beat him with sticks. Do you understand, Arinushka? Have you heard our friend here explain why your hut was burned?

ARINUSHKA: Oh, of what use am I any longer in the world? (*Mitenka talks with her, pointing*

occasionally to Schneidermann and then examining her forehead.)

SCHNEIDERMANN (*to Vasili*): I understand that last year during the famine the whole village received help from the Accursed One through this man. I think that this will not be a good place for me to live. I will go away in a little while. It will be a wonder if the whole village does not burn.

(*Tolstoy enters at right, dressed in peasant costume. Schneidermann starts.*) Ah! Here he is now! (*He hastens to cross himself.*)

MITENKA: What is that you say? Is this he?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Yes. You had better cross yourself.

TOLSTOY (*who has been looking at the hut*): This was Arinushka's home? (*He goes over to her.*)

MITENKA (*crossing himself*): Cross yourself, Vasili.

VASILI: But I do not understand. This man is our friend.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Are you a fool?

MITENKA: Yes, you are a fool, Vasili. Did you not hear this wise man tell how he only pretends to be a friend? It has been known everywhere but here.

VASILI (*doggedly*): Yes, but he is our friend.

He is the one of whom I told you—Leo Nikolayevitch.

MITENKA: You are always a fool, Vasili. (*To Schneidermann.*) Shall we take threshing flails and creep up behind him as he stands there, and pound him on the buttocks?

TOLSTOY: Do not cry so, old woman. We will soon have your hut built again.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*to Mitenka*): First, we had better explain to the other men of the village.

TOLSTOY (*turning to the group*): Brothers, what do you say? Shall we not acknowledge God's goodness by making her a house again?

ARINUSHKA (*for the first time seeming to understand*): Oh, Merciful Father!

TOLSTOY: Ah, Vasili! I did not notice you before. (*He goes to Vasili.*) I will start at once to rebuild the oven. Will you not go and cut some aspens for uprights? Tomorrow we will haul them here and plane them. (*To others.*) Perhaps these other men will also help us.

ARINUSHKA: Glory be to God for sending you!

SCHNEIDERMANN (*to Mitenka*): If he has his way, nothing can save the village.

MITENKA (*going to Arinushka*): Do you not understand, Arinushka, that this is the agent of the Evil One, who destroyed your hut? You have already felt the marks of evil because of him.

ARINUSHKA (*loudly*) : Go on with your lying tales. How can it be as you say? I have never before received any help from him.

MITENKA: What is that you say? He has never helped you before?

SCHNEIDERMANN. It does not matter. The village received help from him. She suffers because of the village.

ARINUSHKA: Where is this man who says my forehead is marked?

MITENKA: We did not say so. He said so. (*Points to Schneidermann.*)

ARINUSHKA (*getting up and shaking her finger at him*) : And who is he? Who is he? The dirty dog with his lying tales!

VASILI: That is so. Who are you?

MITENKA: It is true that we have never seen him before.

ARINUSHKA: Did he offer to help me? Did any of you offer to help me, even though you are my neighbors? But he (*pointing to Tolstoy*) would help me build my house more beautiful than ever.

VASILI: I told you, Mitenka, that this was our friend. This is Leo Nikolayevitch.

ARINUSHKA (*to Schneidermann*) : Do you think, sir, that my forehead is marked? No, but I have a mind to mark yours for you.

VASILI: Tell us who you are.

TOLSTOY (*who has been watching Schneidermann*) : Ah, I think I know who he is. My friend, were you not once a captain of gendarmes in Moscow?

SCHNEIDERMANN: So you remember.

TOLSTOY: I remember with humiliation. It was one of the times in my life when I lost my temper.

SCHNEIDERMANN: In those days the Government did not know what an enemy you are. (*To the others*) Fellow countrymen, this man has been denounced by the Holy Synod as an agent of the Evil One. He is a traitor to the Little Father. I have letters from persons in authority who give me proof of this. If you listen to him, you will see that his master, the devil—God protect me—(*He crosses himself*)—will burn your huts one after another.

MITENKA: How can we tell which of them is right? One of the two of them ought to be beaten with sticks.

VASILI: Be still, Mitenka. This is the man who saved all of our lives in the famine last year. Did the Holy Synod help us then? Did the Little Father remember us? No, but he (*pointing to Tolstoy*) brought food to us from the barbarians who live in Germany across the great ocean and kept our children and our horses alive.

TOLSTOY: Let us all stop this nonsense, which

leads to nothing, and help each other rebuild Arinushka's house.

ARINUSHKA (*to Schneidermann*): Who are you that tries to tell these lies about our father?

VASILI: He is the one who should be beaten. (*He turns and shouts off stage at left.*) Hey! Hey! Come here, Nikita! All come!

MITENKA: You are right, Vasili. Let me find a stick.

TOLSTOY (*thundering*): Stop! There must be no violence! For shame! If you have any regard for me, you will not think in such a way. Do you not remember the commandment of Our Lord that we should love even our enemies—particularly our enemies? Let us be friends with this man. (*To Schneidermann*) Come, brother, why do you not turn from the evil life in which you find yourself, and live here with us honestly? Help us now to rebuild this poor woman's hut. (*Vasili goes out at left.*)

SCHNEIDERMANN: My God, you old fossil! You almost convince me.

(*Shouts are heard outside. A number of peasants run in, led by Vasili.*)

FIRST PEASANT: It is he!

SECOND PEASANT: It is Leo Nikolayevitch!

VASILI: What did I tell you?

FIRST PEASANT: He has come back to us again!

THIRD PEASANT: Ah, I remember how he brought us potatoes, and onions and rye meal for kvas!

FOURTH PEASANT: Ten thousand puds of straw he brought to keep our horses alive!

FIFTH PEASANT: He was at Klekotki and gave us wood. We would have frozen!

PEASANT WOMAN: He found linen for us and bast!

SECOND PEASANT WOMAN (*to child*): Do you remember, child, the milk that he got for you?

SECOND PEASANT: We would have had no seed to plant but for him!

FIRST PEASANT: That is true. He brought us oat seed, and potatoes.

SECOND PEASANT: And hemp and millet.

VASILI: Hurrah for Leo Nikolayevitch!

ALL: Hurrah! Long life to Leo Nikolayevitch!

(*Suddenly a woman comes from left and rushing through the crowd, throws herself at Tolstoy's feet.*)

WOMAN (*sobbing*): Leo Nikolayevitch! Leo Nikolayevitch! You saved my baby's life!

TOLSTOY (*picking her up*): Here, here, my child! You must never do that. Kneel and pray only to God.

WOMAN (*still greeting him*): Leo Nikolayevitch!

TOLSTOY: Stop, I say! Do you want me to scold you?

WOMAN (*to others*): We should have starved if it had not been for him!

ALL: Hurrah for Leo Nikolayevitch!

FIRST PEASANT: We are glad to have you among us again.

TOLSTOY: Stop! Wait!

VASILI: Stop! Listen to what he has to say.

ALL: Yes, be silent.

TOLSTOY: My friends, do not spend your breath any longer on an old man who deserves it so little as I.

FIRST PEASANT: You do deserve it.

TOLSTOY: Wait a moment, I beg of you. It is very distasteful to me that you praise me so much for what I did during the famine. It may have been necessary work at that time to get food and clothing and fuel, as some of us did. But why was it necessary? It was charity work. Should charity work be necessary? I do not think so. I do not like charity work, and I do not believe you do.

SEVERAL: No! No! No charity!

TOLSTOY: Listen, my friends. You are of the people who feed the world. Is it not true? You raise the wheat and the rye and the millet and the potatoes, which are sent all over Russia and much of the rest of Europe. Is it not true?

SEVERAL: It is true. He says rightly.

TOLSTOY: Then is there not something wrong when it is found that you yourselves do not have enough to eat?

SEVERAL: That is what we said. There is something wrong.

TOLSTOY: And you raise the flax and the wool, do you not, that clothes all Russia? Then, is there not something wrong when it is found that you yourselves do not have enough to wear?

SEVERAL: You are right, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: Listen. You have forests growing around you which you cut for great sections, do you not? Then, is there not something wrong when it is found that you do not have enough fuel to keep you warm?

ALL: Something wrong! There is something wrong. What is it? Tell us, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: I will tell you. It is because we are not all living with each other as Christian people should. There are some people like myself of the upper classes who have been riding upon your backs. We must not be angry with them, but we must all work together to see that things are changed. I will tell you a story:

SEVERAL: Good! A story!

TOLSTOY: Some children were given a horse, a real, live horse, and they drove out with it and

had their fun. They drove and they drove, down-hill and up-hill. The good horse was covered with sweat and out of breath, but it continued to pull and obey them; and the children shouted and boasted to one another as to who could make the horse gallop best. And it seemed to them that it was they that were galloping instead of the horse, and they boasted of their race. The children had their fun for a long time without thinking of the horse and of how it worked and suffered; and if they noticed that the horse stopped, they smacked the whip in a more lively fashion and urged it on. But there comes an end to everything. There came an end to the strength of the horse; and in spite of the whip, it began to stop. My friends, do you understand? Some children, such as I myself, have been driving the great masses of the Russian people; they have driven foolishly, without regard for the people. They have spent their days in having a good time at the expense of the people. They have accumulated land and food and all sorts of luxuries at the expense of the people. They have taken the people's wealth and bought even such things as earrings and ball-dresses and diamond necklaces with it. And then —all of a sudden—at the time of the famine, they, the upper classes, realize that the people are in a bad way.

VOICE: Down with the upper classes! Let us pull them down!

TOLSTOY: Wait! If you use violence, you will be like a bound man who tries to free himself by tugging at the ropes. You will only tighten the knots that fetter you.

VOICE: There is something we must do.

TOLSTOY: Yes. I tell you we must all think together how we can live in a Christian way. We are not dumb beasts. We can think, and what is more, we can speak. We need to speak to the upper classes, and we should say to them: we do not want charity, such charity as may have been necessary in the famine to keep us alive. All that we want is for you to get down and unhitch us. We can look out for ourselves then. That is what I am trying to say to them with my life. And that is why I do not like to have you praise me for charity. When one of the children jumps down from the wagon and runs alongside to offer the horse some hay, while the horse is still being driven, it looks foolish. When the upper classes, who depend upon the masses for their food and clothing and fuel, when they take it upon themselves to feed and clothe the masses, it also looks foolish. That is why I am not proud of what I did for you.

FIRST PEASANT: Ah, you are a wise man as well as a good one, Leo Nikolayevitch.

WOMAN: You are a god.

TOLSTOY: Stop! I tell you, that is nonsense! Listen, if we wish to show affection for one another, let us all help to rebuild Arinushka's hut.

SEVERAL: We'll help you, Leo Nikolayevitch!

TOLSTOY: Good! Let the men go and cut aspens for uprights. Tomorrow I will get a team, and we will haul them here and plane them. In the meantime let others make mortar so that we can rebuild the oven.

SEVERAL: Good! It is agreed! (*Most of them go out, one of them calling:* "It is good to work with Leo Nikolayevitch!")

(*As the crowd goes, Masha is seen at the right, where she has been watching. She now comes up.*)

TOLSTOY: Masha, see if you can get some straw. We shall want to plait it for the thatch.

MASHA (*to a young woman who is still there*): Come, Rachel! The women too can help. (*They go out.*)

ARINUSHKA: May God reward you, merciful one!

TOLSTOY: He has rewarded me many times, old woman!

ARINUSHKA: Now I shall have something to live for again.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*sneering*): Yes, you will have a chance to sell vodka again!

TOLSTOY (*starting*): Is it true? Have you done that? (*She is silent.*) Is it for that that we are rebuilding your house?

ARINUSHKA: Vodka is a necessary thing, master.

TOLSTOY: Necessary? No! It is a terrible thing to dull the senses and inflame the passions, and make beasts of men. Well, you must have a house, at any rate.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*sneering*): Your eloquence almost converted me. I suppose if I were only a peasant now, I could walk on the water.

TOLSTOY: Have you no sense of common brotherhood?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Brotherhood? With this human scum? You are welcome to it. I decline the honor.

TOLSTOY: There is one favor I would ask of you.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Only one? I am curious.

TOLSTOY: Yes. You have heard what was said. You have seen the condition of the people. Go back and tell these things to the Government that you represent. Tell them that if they would save Russia—yes, and the world—they must remove this nauseous cancer of poverty that undermines

our whole civilization. They must stop this mad race for money. They must give up the inane luxuries that the proud fools barter their souls for, strutting down the streets of Europe in their elaborate costumes to their extravagant buildings bought with human blood. Do they not see that they are kindling the fires of their own destruction, lighting the fuses that will blow their limbs or those of their children into a million fragments? They had better get off the people's backs. That is the message that I, an old man, Leo Tolstoy, would like to send them.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*sarcastically*): They would no doubt be very grateful.

TOLSTOY: Ah! They are so afraid! These Governments that love their little peoples feel that they must protect them. Do they mean to protect them from hunger and cold and sickness? No! These things seem too commonplace, too simple. No. They must protect their little peoples from the terrible menace of other little peoples. Do they protect them with food, with clothing and fuel? No, these things are not important. They protect them with great guns, with huge standing armies. They coin the wealth of the world into enormous warships that are scrapped in a few years for still more enormous warships. This is the way that they protect their little peoples.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Your knowledge of international affairs is truly amazing.

TOLSTOY: My friend, can you not see that these things are true?

SCHNEIDERMANN: There only seems to be one fact with which you are not acquainted.

TOLSTOY: What do you mean?

SCHNEIDERMANN: You have been living so long here among your—hmm,—brothers, that you evidently have not heard that the Government has at last definitely removed the possibility of War.

TOLSTOY: You mean by the agreement with France?

SCHNEIDERMANN: What else? While you and others do nothing but abuse the Government, the men who devote their lives to their country's welfare worked unselfishly. They met a few French gentlemen at Toulon. They signed a little paper. And the foundations of international peace were established. At one stroke they made the French our brothers. This war that you speak of is not possible now.

TOLSTOY: Ah! You think so? What wonderful brotherhood men show on paper. And now I suppose they will sign papers with the English? with the Germans? with the Japanese?

SCHNEIDERMANN: They will see to those things

in due time. With a water-tight alliance with France, we can face the world.

(*Masha and peasant women come in with straw which they plait near hut.*)

TOLSTOY: This paper that they signed at Toulon, and fired salutes about, and banqueted upon—this paper you think was a move toward Peace? I tell you it is one of the very rumblings that I hear of a Terror that will shake all Europe. It is a move toward war. They are so fearful now that they do not dare to be alone—that is all that that means. What are they fearful of? Are they fearful for the welfare of their peoples? Are they fearful that their peoples will suffer from the great black want of poverty and wretchedness? No, all of their peoples already have those things, and the Governments do not fear. They are fearful for their ill-gotten gains, for the loot of the luxury of which I told you. They are fearful, and they have good cause to be fearful; but the steps that they take are not away from the abyss. The steps that they take are straight forward into it. I tell you, I see Death coming, riding, riding, nearer and nearer. And they are running forward to meet Him—in their fear!

SCHNEIDERMANN: Well, I see you have the voice of a prophet as well as the beard! This is nice talk that you are spreading among the people.

I am glad to have had a sample of it first hand.

TOLSTOY: Perhaps you will tell it then to the Government, as I wish.

SCHNEIDERMANN: I will make a very full report. By the way, you might be interested in a few other papers which the Government has seen fit to sign and which I have here in my pocket. (*He produces several.*) Here is one—a warrant for the immediate arrest and apprehension of one Gusef—

TOLSTOY: My secretary!

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ah! I thought that you might be interested. Here is another requiring the immediate banishment of one Piotr Ivanovitch Biryukof.

TOLSTOY: Biryukof!—My friend!

SCHNEIDERMANN: And another of a similar nature directed against one V. Tchertkof!

TOLSTOY: No! No! Not Tchertkof! My greatest helper!

SCHNEIDERMANN: Here it is. Perhaps you would like to look for yourself. (*Holds it out.*)

TOLSTOY (*not deigning to look*): So it has come—this blow that they have so long threatened. Well, have you another paper there which you have not shown me?

SCHNEIDERMANN: That is all for the present.

TOLSTOY: And have you none against old Leo Tolstoy—the instigator of these poor people?

SCHNEIDERMANN: This batch satisfies for the moment.

TOLSTOY: Ah! They are still afraid—this Government! They are always ready to wound, but they are afraid to strike. Tell them that for me. What are their grounds for action against these men?

SCHNEIDERMANN: They have disseminated forbidden writings,—a book, for example, with the sacrilegious title, "The Kingdom of God Is Within You," and other writings of a similar nature.

TOLSTOY: So this is their method. They attempt to punish or intimidate the men who give these books away. But the real instigator they do not touch. Why do they not put an end to it at once by acting against the source of this pernicious literature? Is this not logical? Is this not reasonable? Will they attempt to stop the smoke and be afraid to smother the fire? Tell them this for me:—

SCHNEIDERMANN: You have already given me so many messages to them that I fear that I cannot remember them all.

TOLSTOY: Tell them this: that they need not hesitate to act against me now, for I assure them

beforehand that I shall continue without ceasing, till my death, to do what they consider evil and what I consider my sacred duty before God. Let them at once either put me into one of their cold, stinking prisons—of which I am not afraid—or if they prefer it, let their hangman put on me the shroud and death cap and push me off the bench so that by my own weight I tighten the well-soaped noose about my old throat! Tell them that.

SCHNEIDERMANN: You exaggerate the need of action against you. They realize—and wisely—that once your associates are punished, your own hypocrisy will stand clear. That at least will undo you.

TOLSTOY: My hypocrisy?

SCHNEIDERMANN: You know what I am saying. Your hypocrisy! You pretend to be the peasant's brother, the only living example of the true Christian faith!

TOLSTOY: I have never pretended that.

SCHNEIDERMANN: You say we must give up all property as an example. You have given up yours.

TOLSTOY: Well?

SCHNEIDERMANN: You have given up your property! Ha! Ha! Ha! Pardon me, old man. It makes me laugh.

TOLSTOY: Say what you have in your mind. Scourge me.

SCHNEIDERMANN (*to women*): Hey, you, old women! Since you are the only ones left! Have you heard this little joke? I am only sorry that I did not recover from his eloquence in time to make it more public. But that is not necessary. He will appreciate it. For that matter the others do, too. You cannot hope to fool them, you know, forever. Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Masha and the other women come up during this speech.*)

TOLSTOY: I know what you are going to say. Say it.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Never fear. I shall not deny myself the pleasure. Ha! Ha! Ha! He says he has given up all his property. To whom has he given it up? To all the old Arinushkas, and Vasilis and Mitenkas, and all the other old fools? Not he! He is a wise man. He gives up his property to his wife and to his children. It is in safe keeping there indeed, I can assure you. What a wonderful act of renunciation!

TOLSTOY: You say much that grieves me because it is true.

MASHA: And he forgets much, too!

SCHNEIDERMANN: No doubt! Ha! Ha! Ha!

TOLSTOY: I do not wish to defend myself. I

have been the first to say myself that my own example has not been what I could wish.

MASHA: Well, I am glad that I am here and that I at least can speak. And I say that he has actually renounced the property. The food that he eats is peasant's food—kasha gruel—which he earns by the sweat of his brow, as the peasants earn theirs. He earns the clothing that he wears. He lights his own fires, does his own daily tasks.

SCHNEIDERMANN: That must be a difficult job at Yasnaya Polyana—a gentleman's estate!

MASHA: When he travels, it is in the third class coaches that he rides.

TOLSTOY: Do not defend me, Masha.

SCHNEIDERMANN: And when he sleeps? Where will he sleep tonight?

MASHA: He will sleep on a hard cot.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ha! Ha! Ha! It must be a difficult thing to do this at Yasnaya Polyana! Tell me, my child, have you ever slept in a peasant's hut? Do you know what the comforts of those places are? Do you know what comfortable little crawling bedfellows they have? Do you know what fresh air and clean sheets they have? Do you know what cosy mattresses they have? Jammed in like lousy pullets on a filthy oven as a roost! No, I will wager you do not know, and the

old dotard, your father, does not know either, or he pretends he does not.

MASHA (*crying*): He does too, you hateful, lying beast!

TOLSTOY: There! There! You have gone and lost your temper!

SCHNEIDERMANN: It must be fun to play at Peasant-Life at Yasnaya Polyana! Ha! Ha! Ha!

MASHA: You would have him leave his wife and family, I suppose, you—oh! you are a bad man!

SCHNEIDERMANN: Come, child! Let us talk in Christian language to one another at least. I only say that it is a very convenient thing for him to have a wife and family that do not share his beliefs.

MASHA: Oh, Father! How can I keep from hating him?

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ha! Ha! Ha!

TOLSTOY: No, Masha, No! Do you not see that it is the measure of truth in what he says that hurts? That is what stings you. Do not be afraid to admit it. I have long recognized it.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ah, I must tell the others this little joke. They will appreciate it.

TOLSTOY: You will tell them nothing that I have not told them myself.

SCHNEIDERMANN: Ah, but your sense of humor

would hardly do it justice. Ha! Ha! Ha! (*He goes out at left laughing. The peasant women go back to hut.*)

TOLSTOY: You see, Masha, the tragedy is that on the one hand I could not get your mother to join me. She and the children were not a peasant family such as Syntayef's. They had to a certain extent been corrupted by luxury, and they could not change their lives. And on the other hand, the tragedy is that I love them all too much to leave them. It puts our example in question because of this. It is the weak spot in our armor. I have known that for a long time.

MASHA: What can we do, Father? What can we do? Shall we go away?

TOLSTOY: I do not know, my child. I cannot find it in my heart to take that step. I think we must bear this cross. It may be that the suffering it causes is not so evil as it seems. But oh! It makes my life at times a loathsome thing! To know that even though I renounce this luxury, I live in it; to know that I cannot shake it from me because, if I do, I shake also the ones nearest to my heart; and yet to know that because of it I am an unworthy instrument of God—Ah!—This is hard to bear.

MASHA: Father! Father! You are crying.

TOLSTOY: Oh, Christ, is it then true!

MASHA: What do you mean, Father?

TOLSTOY: When the Light comes, must a man leave his own flesh and blood to follow it? "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

MASHA: Oh, Father! Father!

TOLSTOY: It means—it means—it means—Ah, Masha!

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE VI

Same as Scene IV. Tolstoy's study at Yasnaya Polyana, on the evening of November 9, 1910, seventeen years later. Tolstoy is sitting at the table, writing. He is now 82 years old, and shows something of the feebleness of age. His hair and beard are white, his frame somewhat shrunken from illness; his eyes seem smaller and have receded farther under his shaggy eyebrows, though they have lost none of their keenness. He writes laboriously.

His daughter Sasha enters. She is twenty-six years old, and is of somewhat larger build than Masha.

SASHA (*holding up letters*) : Father! (*He does not hear and continues writing.*) Father! (*When he again pays no attention, she goes up and touches him on the shoulder.*) Father!

TOLSTOY: Yes, yes. Is that you, Masha?

SASHA: No, not Masha, Father. Sasha.

TOLSTOY: Did I say Masha, my dear? My tongue tricks me sometimes. Ah, well, there is only a little letter of difference between the two. The same loving heart, the same friendly hands,

the same devotion to their old father and to what little of God there is in him. Sasha, my dear, I have been very fortunate in my daughters.

SASHA: I often wish that Masha were here, Father. She could have helped you in ways that I cannot. There is a letter here from Tchertkof—

TOLSTOY: Let me see. Let me see. She would have been—(*he tries to think*)—ten, twenty . . .

SASHA: She would have been thirty-nine years old. Her fortieth birthday would be next February.

TOLSTOY: I used to joke with her, Sasha. I used to tell her that she was older than I, reckoning, you know, from the date of my re-birth. But you, Sasha, I shall have to tell you that you are younger than I. Ah, I am indeed an old man. You are—how old are you, Sasha?

SASHA: I am twenty-six years old, Father.

TOLSTOY: Twenty-six years! Did I ever tell you, Sasha, of the night when you were born?

SASHA: Yes, Father. (*Somewhat impatiently.*) There is a letter here from Tchertkof—

TOLSTOY: It was before I had learned patience. It was, you see, when I was only five or six years old. And it seemed to me then—as it has seemed sometimes since—(*he sighs*)—that I could no longer bear to live in the conditions of life about me. The truth was fresh in me then. The luxury

of the life here ate into my soul like an acid. And I went away.

SASHA: I do not blame you for going away. Perhaps you were right.

TOLSTOY: Ah, there have been times when it has seemed as though I would have been right. But not then—I was not right then, Sasha. It was a very hard time for your mother in those days. You were her twelfth child. And I went away the night before you were born.

SASHA: There is an important letter here, Father, from Tchertkof.

TOLSTOY: I struck out down the path and out to the highroad. I was nimble then. I walked with great strides. I had made up my mind that I must give up everything, and I gave it up gladly. I was filled with the pride of a new convert. You must look out for that pride, Sasha. It comes to people when they first believe. I kept thinking of my own soul, and of how it would be benefited by this new freedom. And I walked for several miles. And then something spoke up in my heart and told me what I had forgotten: that your mother was suffering back home—alone. I saw that my pride had deceived me, and I turned and ran back to take up the cross that I had deserted. Your mother was having a harder time than I, my dear.

SASHA: She has never given up her pride.

TOLSTOY: Do not speak harshly of your mother, Sasha.

SASHA: For twenty-odd years she has sat across the table from you, feasting on meat while you ate kasha gruel.

TOLSTOY: She has lived according to her light, my dear. We must not find fault with her for that.

SASHA: No, she has lived according to her ease.

TOLSTOY (*thinking it well to change the subject*): Did you say there was a letter there from friend Tchertkof?

SASHA: Yes. He says he is sending F. A. Strakhof to see you as his representative on important business.

TOLSTOY: Why does he not come himself?

SASHA: Tchertkof! You ask why he does not come?

TOLSTOY: Yes.

SASHA: He does not come because Mother would not allow him in the house, that is why. Our best friend, and she would not allow him in the house.

TOLSTOY: Ah! I had forgotten. My memory is good to me, Sasha, even when it fails me. It lets me forget all that is unnecessary. I think that Tchertkof should have forgotten and have come.

SASHA: She would have made it very unpleasant for him.

TOLSTOY: Ah, well! What more does he say? I hope that things are going as they should.

SASHA: He is anxious to have the complete manuscript of "The Light Shines in Darkness" as soon as possible.

TOLSTOY: He shall have it—as soon as possible.

SASHA: He says that he is publishing the book of sayings of the wise under the title, "For Every Day."

TOLSTOY: But I told him why I wanted to call it "A Circle of Reading." It suggests the continuous idea that I have in mind.

SASHA: He says that they have been thinking it over, and that they really believe the title "For Every Day" will suit the book better.

TOLSTOY: I think he is a little obstinate, Sasha. Well, well! He works so hard—he is so devoted—we must allow him some faults, I suppose.

SASHA: It is too bad that we cannot work with him more closely; that is where the difficulty comes.

TOLSTOY: That is where the difficulty always comes, Sasha. If we could work closely enough with people, they would never misunderstand. But there are so many things that separate—pride,

custom, selfish desire—and sometimes obstinacy. What else is there in the mail?

SASHA: The usual letters from admirers.

TOLSTOY: Ah! We can dispense with those. But write to them kindly. Write to them kindly. Are there none others?

SASHA: Yes. Here is one, rejoicing in the fact that the Russian Church has excommunicated you. "You are a blasphemer," she says, "against Holy God." She hopes for your early death.

TOLSTOY: She is not likely to be disappointed. Please write her this:—

SASHA (*taking note-book*): Yes.

TOLSTOY: Tell her that even though my beliefs offend, grieve or displease others, I cannot change them any more than I could change my body. I must live my own life, and so must I die—and very soon—and therefore I cannot believe otherwise than as I believe, making ready to go to that God from whom I came. I am not sure that my belief is the one indubitable truth for all time, but I see none other that is simpler, clearer or more perfectly answers all the demands of my intellect and of my heart. Should I find such an one, I would instantly accept it. God requires nothing but the truth, and though I am over eighty years old, I am still searching. But I can never again return to what I escaped from with such suffer-

ings, any more than the flying bird can reënter the egg from which it has emerged.—Are there any others?

SASHA: Here is one that says you do not practice what you preach.

TOLSTOY: Ah! Read me from that.

SASHA (*reading*): "In the midst of luxury you write about the evils of private property. In a State that protects you, you make it hard for the State's Government." And so on. You know the kind.

TOLSTOY: Yes. (*There is a knock on the door.*) Come in! Tell them, Sasha, that their abuse is a bath for my soul. (*Another knock.*) Come in!

(*Strakhof enters cautiously. He is a small man with a suave manner.*)

STRAKHOF (*closing the door cautiously*): Good-day to you, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY (*peering at him*): How do you do, Mr. Strakhof?

STRAKHOF: I desire to see you for a few minutes, if possible, on a most intimate matter. (*He glances at Sasha.*) Is it quite all right?

TOLSTOY: This is only my daughter, Sasha, Mr. Strakhof.

SASHA: I will go, Father.

STRAKHOF: No, no, I beg of you. I only wanted to make quite certain.

TOLSTOY: Sasha is my crutch, Mr. Strakhof. Ever since her sister Masha died, and my wife—

STRAKHOF: Ah! I quite understand.

TOLSTOY: And my wife has been ill—

STRAKHOF: I quite understand. I hope I find you well, sir?

TOLSTOY: Always nearer to death, my friend, and that is good. At my age one cannot jump and run, and one's memory fails; but what of that? Physical and mental strength decrease, but something else greatly increases. I would on no account exchange what I am now, for what I was sixty years ago.

STRAKHOF: It is true that any man at your age must think of death—sad as that fact is to your friends.

TOLSTOY: He had better think of it long before my age, Mr. Strakhof.

STRAKHOF: That is quite true. As I was saying, one of the reasons for my visit today is to ask you—in view of your advanced age—to think of something that we do not like to speak of.

TOLSTOY: I hope that I am not afraid to face all that death implies.

STRAKHOF: Well, then, I must tell you that Mr. Tchertkof has been in consultation with the juris-consult N. K. Muravev. They find that the papers you have drawn with regard to the dis-

position of your writings after your death have no legal validity.

TOLSTOY: I drew them up simply as an expression of my desires. I have little interest in pure legal formality.

STRAKHOF: You must pardon me if I go into this matter at some length. You will recall that the papers as originally drawn declared your desire that all of your writings subsequent to January 1st, 1881, should be no person's private property but should be freely publishable and republishable by all who desire to do so. Furthermore, that all of your manuscripts after your death should be handed to V. G. Tchertkof to deal with, but should be held by him freely accessible to all who may desire to make use of them for publication. You will recall all of this no doubt.

TOLSTOY: I ought to recall it, since it was I who drew up the paper.

STRAKHOF: Exactly. The point is that such a paper has no standing with law courts.

TOLSTOY: I tell you that I am not concerned with law courts. I express my wish. If people after my death have not the decency to live up to it, that is their own sin.

STRAKHOF: Precisely, but the point that Mr. Tchertkof raises is that such an action defeats the principle for which we have fought so long—the

principle of no copyright. Your writings constitute a valuable property. You and Mr. Tchertkof have both believed that this property should be free to the public—as free as the words which you utter from your mouth.

TOLSTOY: Yes, so far as my writings since the year 1881 are concerned, that is true.

STRAKHOF: But you will pardon me, you are aware that Countess Tolstoy does not agree to this.

TOLSTOY: I am aware that Mr. Tchertkof and my wife have a foolish disagreement with each other.

STRAKHOF: And the disagreement arose over this very point. Mr. Tchertkof has taken charge of your writings because you knew that through him free publication by all could be assured. Is that not true?

TOLSTOY: That is true.

STRAKHOF: Well, then, in the event of your demise what assurance have we, your friends, that the valuable papers which you have in your hands would receive the treatment that you wish? Do you think that Countess Tolstoy would ever hand the papers over to Mr. Tchertkof?

(*Tolstoy is silent.*)

SASHA: Father, it is as he says. She will have nothing to do with Tchertkof.

TOLSTOY: My wish would have been clearly stated.

SASHA: And when has she given way to your wishes when property was at stake? Has she paid any attention to your wishes regarding the disposal of the property? Or regarding your works prior to 1881? Does she not know that Tchertkof is your closest friend, and yet she has made him feel that he is unwelcome here?

TOLSTOY: Let us not be harsh with your mother, Sasha.

SASHA: No, let us not be harsh. But let us face facts.

TOLSTOY: Well, what does Tchertkof advise? He knows my wishes.

STRAKHOF: He finds that it will be necessary for you to leave the writings definitely to some heir, to whom your publicly expressed wishes will be sacred. Only in this way can you secure their public utilization.

TOLSTOY: Would he assume the responsibility himself?

STRAKHOF: He does not desire to do so. But he hopes most earnestly that you will choose for the purpose such members of your family as you can trust.

TOLSTOY: What would be necessary in the way of a legal form, then?

STRAKHOF: Will you pardon me if I make sure that the door is closed? (*He goes and fastens it.*) This is what the juris-consult drew up as fulfilling the requirements. (*He takes from his pocket legal papers and passes them to Tolstoy, who reads them.*)

TOLSTOY: The provisions are satisfactory. But this whole affair oppresses me. It is quite unnecessary to insure the propagation of my ideas by taking all sorts of measures. Supposing there was some silly trouble about the writings. Why, no word can perish without leaving its trace, if it expresses a truth and if the man who utters it believes profoundly in its truth. But all these outward means for insuring it come only of our disbelief in what we utter.

STRAKHOF: I understand and appreciate the moral height from which you judge this affair, and so I am sure does Mr. Tchertkof. But the conditions of today are such that if you do nothing to insure the public utilization of your writings, you thereby indirectly hand them over to your family for a period of fifty years. I do not conceal from you how painful it is for Mr. Tchertkof and the rest of your friends, when we hear reproaches aimed at you to the effect that, despite your condemnation of landed property, you nevertheless transferred your estates to your wife and

your children. Equally painful will it be to hear it said that, although you certainly knew that your declaration had no legal validity, you did nothing to secure the carrying out of your wishes, and thereby again consciously assisted the passing on of another valuable property to your family instead of to the world. I cannot express how painful it will be to your friends, Leo Nikolayevitch, to hear such things said after your death and during the triumphant monopolization of your writings by your heirs for fifty years.

TOLSTOY: I understand your point now. It is a weighty argument.

STRAKHOF: It is only because of this that your friends ask you to sacrifice your natural repugnance to legal forms in the interest of the principles for which they have worked.

TOLSTOY: And worked so valiantly. I quite understand. (*Getting up.*) Well, I will think this whole matter over, Mr. Strakhof. If it seems best, I will sign the papers this evening.

STRAKHOF: I will return later, then, shall I not?

TOLSTOY: Yes, but do not go away. Stay with us to dinner.

STRAKHOF (*somewhat embarrassed*): I fear that I might not be a particularly welcome guest to the other members of your family.

TOLSTOY: Ah, you do my wife an injustice there. She has never been so inhospitable at least as I fear Tchertkof has supposed.

SASHA: You do not know the whole story, Father.

TOLSTOY: Sasha, please go and tell your mother that Mr. Strakhof is here, and that he will stay to dinner.

STRAKHOF: There was another matter that Mr. Tchertkof wanted me to take up with you. He suggests a few alterations in the article, "It is Time to Understand." (*Produces papers.*) Here, you will see that—

(*In the meantime Sasha has gone to the door. She unlocks and opens it only to disclose standing in the doorway the Countess Tolstoy herself. The Countess has aged greatly, and is evidently suffering from an overwrought condition.*)

SASHA: It seems I did not have far to go.

COUNTESS: May I ask since when it has been necessary to lock doors in this house?

SASHA: Evidently since there became danger of eavesdropping.

COUNTESS: Ah, you say that! In our house! And what am I expected to be spying upon? Are there some strange secrets here that are being kept from me?

TOLSTOY: Calm yourself, Sonya. This is Mr. Strakhof whom Tchertkof has sent.

COUNTESS: Ah!

TOLSTOY: I have asked him to stay to dinner.

STRAKHOF: I do not wish to put you to any trouble. I think—I—

COUNTESS: That is not what we call trouble, as Mr. Tchertkof well understands. May I ask why we are favored with this unexpected visit?

STRAKHOF: I was just saying to Leo Nikolayevitch that Mr. Tchertkof suggests a few alterations in the article "It is Time to Understand."

COUNTESS: Yes, he is always suggesting alterations.

STRAKHOF: Perhaps you would like to look at them?

COUNTESS: Do you think that he would care for my opinion?

STRAKHOF: Ah, you have me there, Countess Tolstoy.

COUNTESS: He does not even care for my husband's opinions.

TOLSTOY: Sonya!

COUNTESS: Well, is he not even now changing the title of your book, "A Circle of Reading" to his own pet wording—regardless of your wishes?

SASHA: How did you know that?

COUNTESS (*disregarding her*): Never has a man been so exploited by his friends! Friends!

TOLSTOY: Sonya! You must not speak so of Tchertkof!

COUNTESS: I only wish I could speak so *to* Tchertkof. Perhaps you will tell him, Mr. Strakhof?

STRAKHOF: I have no wish, I can assure you, to add to the unfortunate feeling that exists between you.

COUNTESS: Come! I did not mean to be inhospitable. I mean only to be firm in regard to my own rights.

STRAKHOF: I do not misunderstand. I will await your pleasure in the zala, if I may, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: By all means. Sasha, will you not go with him?

(*Sasha and Strakhof go out.*)

COUNTESS: Thank God, he had the sense at last to go! What is it that you have done now? Will you lie to me, too?

TOLSTOY: Sonya! I cannot tell you how you hurt me.

COUNTESS: Well, do they think that I have no sense? Do they think that I do not know what they are up to? And they pretend that they locked the door because Tchertkof had a few alterations

to suggest in a manuscript. A few "anticipatory corrections" as he calls them! That is such a novel thing, I suppose, that they had to lock the door!

TOLSTOY: Can you refrain, Sonya, from your bitterness towards the ones who are attempting to carry out my principles?

COUNTESS: Your principles! Ah, you taunt me with not following them.

TOLSTOY: I did not mean to taunt you. But it is true that you have not followed them.

COUNTESS: I have never been unfaithful to my duties as I have seen them.

TOLSTOY: I understand that, Sonya.

COUNTESS: I have never been unfaithful to my family. And now you would—what is it that you would do?

TOLSTOY: I would only try to assure the world of the honesty of my belief.

COUNTESS: And you have turned to Tchertkof to give the assurance.

TOLSTOY: Well. He has turned his life to go with me.

COUNTESS: And to Sasha, whom you weaned from me even at her birth!

TOLSTOY: What would you have me do, Sonya? Would you deny me any followers? Even in my own family?

COUNTESS: No. You know that I would not.

But in the most sacred matters of our lives I would not take Tchertkof to my bosom.

TOLSTOY: In the sacred matters of principle, Sonya, you would not come yourself. Whom should I take—if not my most loyal helpers?

COUNTESS: You lock the door and hatch conspiracies against me. That is what you do.

TOLSTOY: Sonya!

COUNTESS: Conspiracies against me and your children and grandchildren! You are always scheming how to rob them for the benefit of the world—and Tchertkof!

TOLSTOY: Do not speak like this, Sonya. Do not make it so hard for yourself.

COUNTESS: I know what they are doing. They think to deceive me. But I know, I know. (*She breaks down.*)

TOLSTOY: I would talk the whole matter over with you, Sonya, if you would be patient.

COUNTESS: I will not talk with you about it. You have talked too much already. You are always talking. (*She rushes out.*)

TOLSTOY: Sonya! (*To himself.*) I wonder if I have stayed too long. O property! What a sordid curse you have been to me. My enemies have taunted me because of you. My friends overreach themselves because of you. My family have been separated from me because of you. And now,

when I am an old man near to death, you will not let my end be decent.

(*He searches in a drawer of the table till he finds a letter, which he opens and starts to read. A tear rolls down his cheek which he brushes away. After a moment Sasha enters. She goes up and caresses her father.*)

SASHA: There! There! Father! Is it the old question again?

TOLSTOY: Yes, and I must answer it now. Sasha, my old eyes do not see so well. Read me the letter. (*Hands it to her.*) I want to know how it sounds.

SASHA (*reading*): "My dear Sonya—" but this is addressed to Mother.

TOLSTOY: Yes. Read it.

SASHA: "Yasnaya Polyana, June 8th, 1897." 1897! why that was thirteen years ago!

TOLSTOY: Thirteen years!

SASHA (*reading*): "I have long been tormented by the incongruity between my life and my beliefs. To make you change your way of life, your habits, which I taught you myself, was impossible; to leave you has so far also been impossible, for I thought that I should be depriving the children . . . of the influence . . . which I might have over them, and should be causing you pain. But to continue to live as I have been living these six-

teen years, at one time struggling and harassing you, at another yielding to those influences and temptations to which I was accustomed . . . has also become impossible for me at last." (*Stopping.*) I do not wonder.

TOLSTOY: Go on.

SASHA (*reading*): "And I have now made up my mind to do what I have long wished, to go away. . . . As the Hindus when they near the sixties retire into the forests, as every religious old man desires to dedicate the last years of his life to God and not to jokes, puns, gossip and lawn tennis, so I, who am now entering on my seventieth year, long with all the strength of my spirit for that tranquillity and solitude and, though not perfect accord, still something better than this crying discord between my life and my beliefs and conscience." (*Stopping.*) Father, I understand.

TOLSTOY: Yes, child. Go on.

SASHA (*reading*): "If I did this openly, I should be met with entreaties, reproaches and arguments, and perhaps I should falter and fail to carry out my resolution, and it has got to be carried out. Please forgive me, therefore, if this step that I am taking causes you pain; and in your heart, Sonya, above all, let me go of your own free will, do not seek for me, do not find

fault with me, do not condemn me. My leaving you does not mean that I am dissatisfied with you. I know that you could not, literally *could not,* and cannot, see and feel as I do, and therefore you could not alter your life and make sacrifices for the sake of what you do not believe in. I do not find fault with you; on the contrary, I recall, with love and gratitude, the long thirty-five years of our life together, especially the first half of it, when, with that maternal self-renunciation which is characteristic of you, you bore, so zealously and patiently, with what you thought was your appointed burden. You gave me and the world what you were able to give. You gave much maternal love and self-sacrifice, and I cannot but esteem you for that. But during the latter period of our life, during the last fifteen years, we have fallen away from one another. I can believe that I am to blame, because I know that I have changed, not for my own sake or for the sake of other people's opinion, but because I could not help it. And I cannot blame you for not having followed me, but I thank you and I lovingly recall and always shall recall all that you have given me. Good-by, dear Sonya." And you wrote that thirteen years ago!

TOLSTOY: Yes. I could never go. It seemed to

me that it was my duty; but I could never go. It was my cross and I have borne it.

SASHA: And now?

TOLSTOY: And now I am not so sure. There is a wrong spirit in the house. I seem to be a bone of contention. It may be that it is my duty to go.

SASHA: If Masha were only here! I cannot love my mother.

TOLSTOY: She needs your love more than ever, Sasha. We must all try harder. Now that my powers are failing, I need them most! (*A voice is heard crying: "Leo Nikolayevitch! Where is Leo Nikolayevitch?"*) See what is the matter, Sasha.

(*Sasha goes to door and looks out.*)

SASHA: Do you want to see my father? He is here.

VOICE: Yes. Leo Nikolayevitch! I want to see Leo Nikolayevitch.

(*Agafya, a peasant woman, enters, hobbling on a stick.*)

TOLSTOY: I am Leo Nikolayevitch. What is the matter, Agafya?

AGAFYA: Leo Nikolayevitch, I have always thought you were of God. But my husband—my poor husband! (*She breaks down.*)

TOLSTOY: Help her to a chair, Sasha. (*When she is seated.*) Tell me, what is the matter.

AGAFYA: I have always thought you were of God—

TOLSTOY: We all are, Agafya, if we did but know it. Come! Pull yourself together. What is the matter?

AGAFYA: They have put my husband in jail.

TOLSTOY: That is indeed too bad. I can tell you, I would open the jails, old woman, if I had my way. The foul, stinking, vermin-ridden holes! What is the matter? I will do anything that I can.

SASHA: Tell us what was the matter. Perhaps he was caught with some of your books, Father.

TOLSTOY: Tell us, Grandmother, is that true?

AGAFYA: Is what true? What are you saying?

TOLSTOY: Is it because of things that I have written? Was he jailed because of my books?

AGAFYA: Of course not, old fool!

TOLSTOY: What is the matter, then?

SASHA: Tell us. Who had him put in jail?

AGAFYA: Who had him put in jail? Sophie Andreevna—that is who put him in jail. Your wife!

TOLSTOY: In jail! Sophie Andreevna had him put in jail.

SASHA: What has she done now?

AGAFYA: Oh, it is easy for you to talk. That is what everybody had told us: that it was easy for

you to talk. But we had had faith in you. We thought that you were of God.

TOLSTOY: Yes. Yes. I understand.

AGAFYA: You say that all property belongs to everybody. You say that the peasants have earned the land by their own work.

TOLSTOY: God helping me, I still say it.

AGAFYA: We needed wood. Should we freeze or should we cut some that you said belonged to us?

TOLSTOY (*groaning*): I understand. Go on.

AGAFYA: We cut some wood from your forest. They told on us. And now Sophie Andreevna has put my husband in jail.

TOLSTOY: So it has come—at last.

AGAFYA: It is your wife who sent him there. And you said that it was our forest as much as yours.

TOLSTOY: And I said right. I do not take it back. It is your wood.

AGAFYA: If it is our wood, why should Sophie Andreevna put my husband in jail?

TOLSTOY: This is intolerable. Come, Agafya, I will do everything I can to set it right.

AGAFYA: I told them that I still had faith in you. I had always thought you were of God.

TOLSTOY: Ask your mother to come here at once, Sasha. (*Sasha goes.*) Come, Agafya.

Come this way. I promise you that if old Leo Tolstoy has any influence left here, your husband shall go free tonight.

(*He leads her out. After a moment the Countess comes in. She is immobile, except that her fingers keep clenching, showing that she is in a highly wrought condition. Tolstoy enters and closes the door.*)

COUNTESS: You asked me to come.

TOLSTOY: Yes. Agafya has been here—the old woman whose husband you have thrown in jail.

COUNTESS: Well. What is that to me?

TOLSTOY: Sonya, this must not be.

COUNTESS: Must not? Do you say it must not?

TOLSTOY: My dear, I entreat you. Do not act in this way.

COUNTESS: And let them cut off all our forests, and take our hay? Next they would be moving out the furniture.

TOLSTOY: But can you not see, Sonya? This is intolerable.

COUNTESS: Yes. I can see that it is intolerable. Your beliefs have made it intolerable. You would let them have it without a word.

TOLSTOY: Yes. I have encouraged them to take it. Why do you not have *me* thrown into jail?

COUNTESS: Well, at least I will not join you in beggaring our family.

TOLSTOY: You speak of our family as if they were still little children. Do you think that they would suffer?

COUNTESS: There are our grandchildren now to think of—and more than ever.

TOLSTOY: Sonya, I implore you: have clemency in this case at least. Whosever property it is—

COUNTESS: You are always taunting me with that.

TOLSTOY: No, my dear. Do not misunderstand me. Do not be angry with me.

COUNTESS: You tell me to take the property. You give it to me as though it were something I had a right to manage as I please. And when I do, you berate me for it. You make it impossible for me. Did you give me the property and tie my hands so that I cannot manage it? No. He cut the wood. I warned him. And he cut again. And he is in jail, where he belongs. And I will not lift a finger to take him out.

TOLSTOY: God forgive you, Sonya. You are not well, or you would not behave like this.

COUNTESS: Oh, do not think you must coddle me because I am not well. It is not because I am unwell that I have not followed you and Tchertkof! (*She storms out.*)

TOLSTOY: Alas! Sonya, if you had only followed us, your conscience would not now tempt

you to do this thing. (*He sinks down in the chair. After a moment he goes to the door and calls:*) Sasha! (*She appears.*) Tell Strakhof to come. (*She obeys.*) Well, it has come at last. It has had to come. (*Strakhof enters. Tolstoy closes door.*) My friend, I have decided to sign your paper.

STRAKHOF: I am indeed glad that you see it in that light, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: I have decided that I must make my example more clear, or else people will not believe me. It is as the old woman says: they do not have faith in words alone.

STRAKHOF: What old woman do you mean, Leo Nikolayevitch?

TOLSTOY: Oh, it is an old story. Let us not go into that. Where do I sign?

STRAKHOF: Here.

TOLSTOY: Whatever of property I have left to me in the form of my writings, I bequeath to my daughter Sasha.

STRAKHOF: I am sure that Mr. Tchertkof will be very much pleased.

TOLSTOY: Ah! I was not thinking of Tchertkof. Sasha will understand what I would have done. There! It is over. I hope that I am through with property at last.

STRAKHOF: I will sign here as a witness. (*Signs.*) We shall need another signature.

TOLSTOY: Wait. I will get another. (*Goes to door.*) Serge Petrovich! (*Serge appears—now also an old man.*) Serge Petrovitch, I have a favor to ask of you—I shall not have to trouble you many more times with favors.

SERGE: I hope you may for several years yet, Leo Nikolayevitch.

TOLSTOY: Will you sign here as a witness?

SERGE: I am not much of a writer, Lyovotchka, but I will try.

(*He scrawls his signature with great difficulty.*)

TOLSTOY: Thank you, Serge Petrovitch. (*Serge goes.*) (*To Strakhof.*) Tell Tchertkof, please, that he has my love. I shall write him soon from somewhere.

STRAKHOF: I will tell him. I wish to thank you again, Leo Nikolayevitch, on behalf of your friends for your courtesy and devotion. (*He goes.*)

TOLSTOY: Friends! Friends! Who are a man's friends? (*Sasha enters.*)

SASHA: Father! Father! What can we tell Agafya? She is outside. She said you would give her some assurance. Oh, Father! It is terrible. What can we tell the old woman?

TOLSTOY (*straightening up*): Tell her still to have faith. I offer myself as a hostage to my beliefs. Ah, Sasha! Whatever comes, I must teach

the world this, and there must be no mistake. There can be no limits upon the love of mankind. There can be no walls between rich and poor. It is the last sacrifice, Sasha. There was a time when I had pride. I cast it from me. I had literary art. I turned it to the service of God. I gave my strength. I gave my brains. I gave my voice. And always as I gave, my spirit grew lighter. I thought that I had given up my property, but always people have refused to believe me. Now I give up the last strings, Sasha. I go; and while I am sad for all of the sorrow that those dear to me will endure, I have found my God. Sasha, I have never been so close to Him as now.

SASHA (*breaking down*): Oh, Father! Father! You are too old to go away. You must not.

TOLSTOY: There! There, my child! Run and comfort Agafya as best you can. (*He takes her to the door, and coming back, picks up the letter. Reads for a moment.*) Well, it was said then as well as I could say it now. But I must write another line. Ah, Sonya, you must have another line. (*He writes, then takes flower from vase and puts it with the letter on the table. After a moment he goes to the door and calls.*) Serge Petrovitch! (*Serge appears.*) Serge, please find Dushan. Tell him I send word that it is time. (*Serge hesitates.*) Yes, just that. He will understand. (*Serge leaves.*

Tolstoy goes to window, and opens it, showing black night outside.) Ah! It is dark. I shall need a lantern. (*He takes a lantern from the corner, and going to the table, lights it. Then he turns out the lamp, leaving the lantern as the only light in the room.*)

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE VII

The telegraph office at Astapovo early in the morning eleven days later (Nov. 20, 1910). At the left in a small room behind a screened window the telegraph operator can be heard sending messages. A door opens beside the window. At a small table at the right sits an interpreter writing. He is a small man in Russian costume with side whiskers and large glasses. Beside him an English reporter, Byrnes, tall, clean shaven, in tweed suit, stands with sheets of copy paper in his hand. The outside door is open at center, and in the doorway keeping watch stands a burly Russian peasant, Ivan. Outside is the indistinct light that comes before dawn. Occasionally figures of peasants can be seen passing in the street outside.

BYRNES (*to Interpreter*): Tell me if you do not understand any of the words. I am very anxious to get it just right.

INTERPRETER: I am quite used to English, monsieur.

BYRNES: And let me know if I read too fast.

INTERPRETER: You need not fear. I am accustomed to dictation.

BYRNES: Are you ready, then?

INTERPRETER: Yes. I am ready.

BYRNES (*reading in a slow, chanting sort of way*): "Astapovo, Russia, November twentieth —Times, London"—

INTERPRETER: Is that sufficient address—Times, London?

BYRNES: Yes. Of course. Ready? (*Dictating.*) —"In the little red house of the station agent across the way Count Leo Tolstoy, Russia's great writer and modern prophet, lies dying." (*To Ivan who has moved*)—What is it, Ivan? Is something happening?

IVAN (*relapsing*): No. It was nothing.

BYRNES (*resuming dictation*): "The illness, which caused his removal from the train five days ago in the midst of his sensational flight, has been growing more and more acute."

INTERPRETER: What was that last word?

BYRNES: "Acute."—Severe, you understand?

INTERPRETER: I have it.

BYRNES (*resuming*): "Six physicians, in whom he has little confidence, are battling for his life; but he is rapidly losing consciousness and the end is expected momentarily. In the meantime Countess Tolstoy, who arrived here early this morning on a special train, has not been admitted to the sickroom, because of"—

INTERPRETER (*with a final scrawl*) : I have finished a page.

BYRNES: Let us start the operator with that then. (*Takes sheet from Interpreter to Operator's window.*) Here! He has written it all in Russian. Will you start that going, please? There will be more in a few minutes. (*To Interpreter*)—Where was I? "Countess Tolstoy," and so forth —Oh, yes!—"has not been admitted to the sick-room because of the fear of the doctors and of Tolstoy's friends that the shock would be too great for her husband. It is said that"—(*To Ivan, who has started*) : What is it, Ivan?

IVAN (*leaving*) : Wait.

(*Byrnes hurries to doorway. Interpreter follows.*)

OPERATOR (*inside room*) : Is there some change? (*He opens door and comes out anxiously.*)

(*There are voices outside. Ivan returns.*)

IVAN: Count Ilya, the son, has come out. That is all.

(*Byrnes, Interpreter and Operator return to places.*)

BYRNES (*to Interpreter*) : Where was I?

INTERPRETER: "It is said that"—

BYRNES: Oh, yes. (*Resuming*) "It is said that Tolstoy himself does not know of the presence of

his wife, and that he repeatedly asks for her, when he arouses from the delirium into which he sinks more and more frequently. He is surrounded by several of his children. Alexandra, or Sasha, as she is called, the youngest daughter, who accompanied him on his flight, and the older children, Mme. Suhotin, Serge and Ilya Tolstoy, and by his intimate friends, Tchertkof and Boulanger. Countess Tolstoy still exhibits symptoms of the grief which caused her to attempt suicide by throwing herself into a pond on her estate at Yasnaya Polyana, but has regained her self-control sufficiently to acquiesce"—

INTERPRETER: What is that word, monsieur?

BYRNES: What? Acquiesce? It means to assent —yield—give in.

INTERPRETER: I understand now.

BYRNES: "To yield to the wishes of the physicians. She remains heart-broken outside the house. It is now possible to state the immediate cause of the illness which struck Tolstoy down within a few days of his departure from home. After riding over fifty versts in the railway coach he left it and entered a dirty, ill-ventilated third-class car attached to a freight train at Gorbatchyovo. For over a hundred versts he continued his journey with a crowd of ill-smelling workmen, packed tightly like cattle in the car. Upon leaving the

train to visit his sister at the convent at Shamardino, he was exposed to chill winds, and caught a severe cold, which"—

INTERPRETER: I have finished another page.

BYRNES (*taking it to Operator's window*): Here is some more of the story. Could you read the other all right?

OPERATOR: Yes. I am sending it.

BYRNES: (*to interpreter*):—"A severe cold, which grew worse as he continued doggedly on his zig-zag journey across Russia. It is believed that Tolstoy and his daughter were on their way to join a community of followers on the shores of the Black Sea. One of the remarkable features of the affair is that even on what is probably his death-bed Tolstoy is not concerned so much with his own fortunes as with those of the peasants. Yesterday he is said to have whispered to the friends about his bedside: 'There are so many suffering people in the world, and you are concerned only with me!' "

IVAN (*in doorway*): Wait!

BYRNES: Is something happening?

(*The Operator comes to the door.*)

IVAN: No. It was nothing. I was mistaken.

(*Outside it has been growing lighter. The figures of the peasants can be made out more dis-*

tinctly as they pass. A throng of them can be seen anxiously waiting.)

BYRNES (*continuing*): "When the famous man saw that he was attended by a number of physicians, his eyes filled with tears, and he remarked: 'The peasants! Think how *they* die!' At other times he shows great concern over his wife. His eldest daughter is quoted as having said to him: 'Don't let us talk of Mama; it agitates you too much,' to which his reply was: 'Ah, no! That is most important.' This anxiety is all the more significant in view of the rumors of friction between Count and Countess Tolstoy in regard to his beliefs. Meanwhile the minutes drag themselves out painfully like hours. The night is a torture. Day is just dawning. And the most remarkable phenomenon"—

INTERPRETER: Wait! What is that word?

BYRNES: Phenomenon? Event, perhaps. You understand?

INTERPRETER: I have it.

BYRNES (*resuming*): "The most remarkable event seems not so much that in the room where the man who has lived his day is now dying, as in the street, where the people, so long oppressed and downtrodden, seem to be reborn. Rough muzhiks, old women, young men and children have been gathering all night from the surrounding

country to pay their respects to the man who called himself their brother. They bring flowers, yesterday great quantities of forget-me-nots, for their 'beloved teacher and friend.' It is reported that the Government fears a public demonstration. Rumors of consultations"—

INTERPRETER: Wait! Here is another page.

BYRNES (*taking it to window and leaving it*): "Rumors of consultations between the Tsar and the Holy Synod in regard to the attitude of the Church are also rife. Representatives of both the Church and the Government are here anxiously waiting. Messages are being sent constantly, and instructions are arriving from St. Petersburg. One has a feeling that here at this little village of Astapovo a Third Power is perhaps passing from one man to assume a definite place in Russian life."

(*There is a commotion outside.*)

IVAN: Wait! Something has happened. (*He leaves his post. Excited voices are heard. In an instant Ivan reappears.*) Wait! She has been admitted. (*He rushes out again.*)

BYRNES: They have let the Countess in? (*He hurries to doorway.*)

INTERPRETER (*going to Operator's window*): They have let the Countess in.

OPERATOR (*coming out*) : God be praised.

(*The Interpreter and Operator follow Byrnes to door, where they watch.*)

VOICE (*outside*) : She has thrown herself on Leo Nikolayevitch.

ANOTHER: I saw through the window. She is asking his forgiveness.

BYRNES (*coming back in and grabbing Interpreter*) : Here! Quick! Take this. Take this down: "Later: Countess Tolstoy has just been admitted. Whether her husband is able to talk with her is doubtful; he is reported to have lost consciousness."

IVAN (*reappearing*) : She is smoothing his forehead and saying: "My beloved! My own!"

BYRNES: Good, Ivan! (*To Interpreter.*) "But your correspondent has it on good authority that there has been a complete reconciliation."

(*There is another commotion outside.*)

BYRNES: What was that, Ivan?

IVAN: Count Ilya Tolstoy is tapping at the window outside. Something seems to have happened. The door is locked, and he cannot get their attention. Wait! They are opening the window. Wait! (*To Operator.*) Hush! Be still, you! The doctor is speaking to Count Ilya. (*He leaves post.*)

(*Byrnes and Interpreter go to doorway. Operator comes out. Suddenly from outside a great wail goes up. The Operator wrings his hands.*)

VOICE (*outside*) : He has passed away.

IVAN (*reappearing*) : He has passed away.

BYRNES (*to Interpreter*) : Here! Quick! Put this down: (*dictates*) "Later: Count Tolstoy has just died."

(*Interpreter writes hurriedly. Byrnes grabs his dispatch. He goes to window, and not finding Operator looks around. The Operator is sitting on a chair in corner weeping.*)

BYRNES: Here. I am anxious to have this go at once, ahead of the rest: "To Times, London."

OPERATOR (*paying no attention to Byrnes*) : Oh, he was like a brother, although I had never seen him before.

BYRNES (*after a moment*) : Well, I'll be damned. I beg your pardon. It can go a little later all right.

(*Outside a procession of peasants pass, singing the lament, "Vyatchnaya Pamyat—Eternal Memory." Byrnes, the Interpreter and the Operator watch them. Ivan has already gone. Old men, women and children pass by the door singing the litany. A huge peasant, going by, catches sight of the Operator weeping. He comes in, wiping his*

grizzly eyes with his sleeve, and going up to the Operator puts his arm about his neck.)

PEASANT: Mourn not for him, brother. He loved the people so.

(*The singing continues as the Curtain descends.*)

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